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The Early American Chroniclers

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THE  
EARLY AMERICAN  
CHRONICLERS.

BY  
HUBERT HOWE BANCROFT.

SAN FRANCISCO :  
A. L. BANCROFT & COMPANY, PUBLISHERS.  
1883.



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# THE EARLY AMERICAN CHRONICLERS.

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Facts can be accurately known to us only by the most rigid observation and sustained and scrutinizing scepticism.

*Froude.*

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IN the *North American Review* for April 1876 appeared an article by Lewis H. Morgan entitled "Montezuma's Dinner," to which some prominence has been given, notably and of late by Thomas Wentworth Higginson in *Harper's Magazine* for August 1882, in an article entitled "The First Americans." As Mr Morgan takes for his text the second volume of my *Native Races of the Pacific States*, which treats of the aboriginal civilization of the Mexican and Central American table-lands, and as his remarkable hypotheses, which seem to find intelligent support, affect not alone the quality of American aboriginal culture, but the foundations of early American history, and indeed of all historic evidence, I deem it my duty to state briefly and plainly my views upon the subject.

I confess to have been a little startled by the statement of Colonel Higginson, that the speculations of Mr Morgan were so generally accepted by scholars.

Nevertheless I was pleased to learn that within a few years there seemed to have come an answer to the question, who and whence were the aboriginal Americans; that the literary and monumental remains of the Aztecs, Mayas, and Mound-builders might now be translated by skilful students; that a clew to the labyrinths of race and origin had been found—found thirty years ago, though successfully applied for only eight or ten years; and when further assured that conjecture in this direction has begun for science a new era, and that although there may be some mysteries relating to humanity not yet solved, there remains little affecting American archæology which the new theory will not make plain—I was pleased, because these are things I have long wished to know.

But when informed that early American annals are by the light of this new theory transformed, and to a great extent annulled, the eyes of the first comers having deceived them; that the aboriginal culture, its arts, literature, sciences, politics, and religions being not these but other things, as is clearly shown by the 'new interpretation,' and that the tales of the conquerors must accordingly be written anew, written and read by this new transforming light; that there never was an Aztec or a Maya empire, but only wild tribes leagued like the northern savages; that Yucatan never had great cities, nor Montezuma a palace, but that as an ordinary Indian chief this personage had lived in the communal dwelling of his tribe; that we can see America as Cortés saw it, not in the words of Cortés and his companions, or in the monumental remains of the south, but in the reflection of New Mexican villages, and through the mental vagaries of one man after the annihilation of facts presented by a hundred men, I was surprised that such conceits should ever assume tangible form and be received as truth by any considerable number of scholars. I was not surprised, however, to see my much admired friend frankly admit, before concluding his essay, that there



were lions in the path in the form of facts, that it was easier to believe the Spanish conquerors than to accept some of Mr Morgan's positions, and that, after all, the matter of origin must still end in an interrogation mark.

If I rightly comprehend the Morgan hypothesis, it is that, by systems of kinship conspicuous in particular among the Iroquois and Ojibways, and present in fainter proportions everywhere, the races of the earth may be divided into savage and civilized, in some such way as hitherto they have been classified by physical, linguistic, and social characteristics. In one category would thus be placed the Aryan and Semitic races; in the other the Turanian, Malayan, and American. Convinced that the American nations all belong to one family, Mr Morgan assumes that their various institutions must be practically identical, and that the social customs of extinct tribes may best be learned, not from the statements of men who wrote from actual observation, but from the study of existing tribes. Himself familiar with the Iroquois, and to some extent with other northern tribes, he applies the Iroquois tribal organization of gentes, phratries, tribes, and confederations to the nations of Mexico and Central and South America, thus making all savages, and all statements to the contrary falsehoods. Among other tests of civilization are those of the marriage of single pairs and inheritance, a plurality of wives or husbands, and community of property belonging of course to savagism. By this system unity of race is established, and the Americans are referred for their origin to Asia.

With Mr Morgan's theory, as such, I have nothing to do. Not dealing in theories of race and origin myself, further than sometimes to catalogue them and wonder which of them all is most absurd; not being specially concerned whether the inhabitants of the Mexican and Central American table-lands are called savage or civilized, especially by those whose concep-

tion of the meaning of these words is quite different from my own, I paid little attention to Mr Morgan's article, not even once carefully reading it until my attention was called to it by Colonel Higginson. But concerning the effect of such teachings on popular estimates of historical evidence, particularly as touching the early American chroniclers, I am deeply interested.

If I am correctly informed, Mr Morgan obtained but little information from Mexico and Central America supporting his theory; but as it must be common and universal in order to stand at all, it was necessary his *ipse dixit* should be employed to extend his doctrines over the southern plateaux; so with all his strength he said it must be so, and was so, all eyes and brains to the contrary notwithstanding. All that was seen and said at the time of the conquest, and all that has since been seen or said conflicting with this fancy, is illusion. Now I venture to affirm, with all respect, that no adequate proof exists in support of his suppositions concerning Mexico; that is, no reasonable, tangible evidence, such as would be accepted by unbiassed common-sense. There are analogies, some of them remarkable. Nature is everywhere one; the nations of the earth, of whatever origin, are formed on one model. But for every analogy these theorists have found, their predecessors have found a score of analogies in support of some other theory. Arguing from analogy to prove origin or race is not sound reasoning.

In looking over Mr Morgan's writings, it is to be noticed that traces of his tests become more and more vague as the southern and more advanced nations are approached. His attempt to locate the ancient Cibola shows no small lack of skill in the use of evidence. Likewise, though more dogmatical in some respects, in his later works he apparently relinquishes in some degree the positions which at first were maintained with such arbitrary obstinacy, and spends some



time in qualifying former errors; but it seems that disciples, more wild than their master, have arisen, who by the blind pursuit of their *ignis fatuus* are rushing headlong into a gulf of absurdity. It seems a long leap indeed, but one made by them with apparent ease, from a theory resting on a trace of certain organizations in the north, and which may by much research be made to assume some weight, to an arbitrary conclusion that the Mayas were identical in their institutions with the Pueblo Indians. Grant the fundamental doctrine, and there is yet a wide distance between Zuñi and Uxmal. It requires a vivid imagination to see only joint-tenement structures in the remains at Palenque. But admitting it, the radical difference in plan, architecture, and sculptured and stucco decorations, to employ his own line of argument, suggests a corresponding development and improvement in other institutions and arts which would introduce some troublesome variations in the assumed identity with the Pueblos and Iroquois, even if all started together. The Maya hieroglyphs, and even certain of the Aztec, form also an obstacle by no means so easily removed. True, not being deciphered, their actual grade cannot be positively proved; yet the common picture-writing contains enough of the phonetic element to place the better class high above the line fixed by the new transforming light as the mark of civilization. Even by this bright illumination it seems scarcely possible to reconcile the testimony of existing relics, and of Spanish witnesses who came into contact with the Maya and Nahua nations, with the narrow conclusions of supporters of the all-directing consanguinity. In the earlier life of the hypothesis the change to what is called descriptive consanguinity and the inheritance of property were made tests of civilization; but these tests were abandoned when it was ascertained, among other things, that the Aztecs did inherit personal property, and to a certain extent landed estate.

If this were the only theory ever advanced to prove unprovable propositions regarding the Americans, it might be more imposing; but as it is only one of fifty, each of which has had its day and its supporters, much as we would like to know what it professes to be able to tell, we cannot look forward with any degree of confidence to seeing its mighty promises fulfilled. Nor do I regard such investigation as in every respect beneficial: on the contrary, it appears to me detrimental where facts are warped to fit theories, the theory being of less importance to mankind than the fact. Unless care is taken, the investigations now going on may be absolutely damaging to science and truth by the evident bias of some of the investigators. On the other hand it is true that great discoveries have sprung from apparently puerile conceits; and facts are sure to live, however sometimes distorted, while false doctrines are sure to die, however ably presented.

In common with all such suppositions, the paths by which the advocate reaches his conclusions are fuller of instruction than the conclusions themselves. There is something of instruction in the nine massive folios left by the poor demented Lord Kingsborough, who greatly desired to prove the American Indians Jews, though he was not one whit nearer such proof at the end than at the beginning. The more knowledge the learned Abbé Brasseur de Bourbourg brought to the subject the more confused he became, until the latter parts of his labors were directed toward revising his earlier conjectures. Such a course appears not unusual with theorists—from the dogmatic to the argumentative, then back to the dogmatic again, forever explaining away mistakes and falling into new ones. The eloquent Robert Mackenzie is still in the first stage of dogmatism when with a glance at the map showing the proximity of Asia and America he would forever settle the question of origin. Nor is the straining of modern scientists to prove Asiatic intercourse by

shipwrecked Japanese junks at all necessary. It is a well established fact that for many centuries there has been free intercourse between the peoples on either side of Bering Strait, both by means of boats and by crossing on the ice. It may be as Mr Morgan says, though his arguments appear scarcely more convincing than the arguments of those who preceded him, or of those who came after him. Some of these other theories are held to-day; grant them all—what then? Grant that the Americans are one stock with the people of Asia, or Scandinavia, or Africa, or Armenia, there still remains to be proven whether the Old World peopled the New, or the New the Old; where stood the primordial cradle or cradles of the race; where man was first made, and how. This involves a knowledge of all things tangible, to know which involves a knowledge of things intangible.

It seemed easy for Mr Morgan, from his familiarity with certain of the northern tribes of America, to express the opinion, and bolster it by plausible arguments and analogies, that the various aboriginal nations of America were one people and their institutions practically identical; but his whole line of argument in the *North American Review*, so far as relates to the extension of his system over Mexico and Central America—and with that alone am I concerned—is exceedingly weak, so much so that, as before stated, when the article was first published I deemed it not worth serious consideration; so do I now, except that it appears to be misleading certain honest minds.

He begins by telling what the Spanish conquerors found in Mexico; not what they reported themselves to have seen, but what they should have seen to establish the new interpretation, which being infallible, the Spanish conquerors did not see what they saw, but something else. Nor does it affect the facts to call the Nahua culture savagism or civilization, Montezuma's dwelling a palace or a tenement-house,



himself emperor or cacique, and his subordinate rulers lords or chiefs. It is certainly cool for Mr Morgan, who never examined the monumental remains of the Aztecs, who had no greater opportunity than others of studying their social system, and who in fact never knew anything about it except upon the evidence of the very witnesses he denounces as blind and false, sweepingly to assert, in order to extend a preconceived theory over all the nations of America, that the conquerors were mistaken, that they could not have seen what they thought they saw. It is the old line of reasoning employed by learned superstition these many centuries; if the universe, or any part of it, does not accord with the doctrine, so much the worse for the universe, which must thereupon be reconstructed. As the good elder of one of our fashionable churches lately remarked, "If the bible affirmed that Jonah swallowed the whale, I should believe it."

Without advancing adequate evidence to show the existence of his system among the Nahuas, Mr Morgan engages in sage discussions concerning it, transforming by the light of the new interpretation as many of the new facts into his fancies as suits his purpose. In doing this, he allows the chroniclers to be right in whatever they say supporting his views; in all such statements as oppose his system they were in error. It was indeed a transforming light that enabled this man to see, not being present, what others could by no means perceive though they were on the ground; and he kindly admits that the early histories of Spanish America may for the most part be trusted, except where his pet project is touched.

This, then, is my opinion of the Morgan theory: There may be grounds for certain of its suppositions in certain directions, but there are not sufficient grounds for its acceptance in regard to the nations of the Mexican and Central American table-lands, and not the slightest excuse for its authors in attempting to sweep from the face of the earth, by mere negation, all

persons and facts opposing their theory. It is not by such means that reasonable hypotheses are established; blank negation never yet overturned substantial truth. Further than this, were Mr Morgan's system all that he claims for it, and did it in reality pervade all the nations of America, including the Aztecs and the Mayas, it still proves nothing against aboriginal civilization, or against the veracity of the Spanish chroniclers.

Colonel Higginson says truly that whether a people may properly be called civilized is a matter of definitions, though I must confess my inability to follow him when he makes a radical difference of meaning in the terms prehistoric civilization and a very skilful barbarism. I may be altogether at fault in my conception of progressional phenomena and the meaning of the terms savage and civilized. I am so, or else their popular signification and use are incorrect and absurd. Probably no words so freely used are so little understood. The terms are almost universally employed to designate fixed conditions, when by the very nature of things such conditions as applied to man are impossible.

Mr Morgan classified culture periods under the categories of savagism, barbarism, and civilization: to emerge from the first of which there should be knowledge of fire, fish subsistence, and the bow and arrow; from the second, pottery, domestication of animals, agriculture, and smelting of iron; and to attain full civilization a phonetic alphabet was necessary, or use of hieroglyphs upon stone as an equivalent.

This may have been a convenient arrangement for his purpose, and I see no reason why he, and all who choose, should not employ it. But surely the same right should be accorded others, who perchance may find another classification convenient. For instance, one might wish to throw Mr Morgan's three divisions into the one category of savagism, and spread his idea



of civilization upon a higher plane; for surely our present highest civilization is as much superior to the condition essential to admission into his highest class as his highest class is superior to his lowest. Italian song, French art, German letters, English poetry, and American invention are certainly far enough in advance of the first use of the phonetic alphabet to entitle such accomplishments to a new category.

One estimates a nation's civilization by its agriculture; another by its industrial arts; others by the quality of its religion, morality, literature, or political and social institutions. Some say that tillers of the soil should be preferred before herders of cattle; some hold workers in iron and coal above workers in gold and feathers; some place pottery in advance of sculpture, the fine arts before the industrial; some compare implements of war, others phonetic characters, others knowledge of the movements of the heavenly bodies; some would take a general average.

But weighing a people's civilization, or lack of it, by any of these standards, yet other standards are necessary by which to measure progress. What is meant by half civilized, or quarter civilized, or wholly civilized? A half civilized nation is a nation half as civilized as ours. But is ours civilized, fully civilized? Is there no higher culture, or refinement, or justice, or humanity in store for man than those formed on present European models, which sanction coercion, bloody arbitrament, international robbery, the extermination of primitive peoples, and hide in society under more comely coverings all the iniquities of savagism? Judging from the past and the present there is yet another six thousand, or sixty thousand years of progress for man, and then he may be as much a savage, compared with his condition at the end of the next twelve thousand or one hundred and twenty thousand years' term, as he was at the beginning compared with the present. Is there then no such thing as civilization? Assuredly not, in the signifi-

cance of a fixed condition, a goal attained, a complete and perfected idea or state. Civilization and savagism are relative and not absolute terms. To attempt to make them absolute and apply them to fixed conditions is to render them meaningless, and make null the conditions indicated. For if civilization is a fixed state, and not a moving forward, then the nation which ten thousand years ago was civilized, having made some progress from primeval savagism, may be to-day savage, having yet as much progress to make during the next hundred centuries; that is to say, the present people of London and Paris may perhaps not improperly be called savages by the wonderfully advanced citizens of Wrangel Island ten thousand years hence. The moment the man primeval kindles a fire, or employs a crooked stick in catching food, he has entered upon his never ending progressional journey; he is no longer wholly and primordially savage. The terms being rightly employed, there are no absolute savages or civilized peoples on the earth to-day; and when there are so many standards by which progress may properly be measured, is it wise to warp fundamental facts in dogmatically thrusting one people into the category of half civilized, and another but slightly different into that of one quarter savage? Perhaps it would do to designate the ever constant advance by prefixes, first a super-civilization, then a super-super-civilization, and so on until, between the beginning and end, instead of a poor single *semi*, we might have a hundred fixed stages, not one of which by any possibility could be so defined in words as completely to fit any one of the millions of human conditions. At intervals along the early part of the upward leading line are arbitrarily placed marks, and those who for the moment happen to occupy the spaces are given designations which are supposed to adhere to them and all who come after them throughout all time, when howsoever definite an idea we may have of that end of the line which began with man, of the other,

which will never cease spinning until the last human being has left the planet, we can have no conception. For aught we know it may not stop short of omniscience.

Take any one of Mr Morgan's tests of civilization and see how absurd it is. Who gave this man the right to say that workers in iron should be preferred before workers in wool, or that he who trained animals was greater than he who trained the lightning; or that were Utah to attain to the culture of ancient Greece, so long as polygamy was practised they could not be called civilized—nay, if John Stuart Mill were to marry George Eliot and Mrs Browning, the prattle of the preacher that bound them would transform them into savages!

There are as many varieties of civilization as there are civilized peoples. Civilization is an unfolding, and civilization develops mainly from its own germ; it is not a superficial acquisition, but an inward growth, even if nourished by extraneous food. You may whitewash a savage with your superiority, but you cannot civilize him at once.

Whether we turn to the extreme eastern kingdoms of Asia, or to the region watered by the Euphrates and the Nile, all inhabited since the remotest historic past by races of acknowledged culture, everywhere we find vast differences and strong peculiarities in the respective cultures, developed by environment. Some of the characteristics are of a high order, others descend to a grade of actual barbarism; some are in course of development, others stationary, or even retrograding. The Nahua culture partakes of the same traits, fashioned by its peculiar environment. For purposes of his own, Mr Morgan arbitrarily prescribes limits to what is called civilization in order if possible to prevent the Nahuas from entering its precincts. In this effort he ignores many distinctively higher traits which the most superficial observer must discover among the southern races; he chooses to dis-



regard or slight the very distinct evidences of not merely settled life, but of settled communities under a high form of government, with advanced institutions and arts.

•I will now introduce some of the principal chroniclers in person, making as close and critical an analysis of their characters and writings as the most sceptical could desire, weighing the quality of their evidence with evenly balanced judicial scales; after which I will present briefly some facts and characteristics on which, according to my conception of the term, the Nahuas and Mayas may justly lay claim to be called civilized. I will give beforehand the proof that these traits did actually exist among the peoples of the Mexican and Central American table-lands at the time of their conquest by the Spaniards, laying before the reader the principal authorities in their true character as fully as I am able to discover it, with all their merits and demerits, their veracity and mendacity. I am not aware of any special desire to prove the presence or absence of a civilization in this instance. If my historical writings display any one marked peculiarity, it is that of a critical incredulity in respect of both Indian and Spanish tales. I have never placed myself in a position where I was tempted to create or exaggerate. I have no theory to advocate. My narrations are based on the reports of eye-witnesses whose characters have been studied, whose education, idiosyncrasies, positions, conditions, temper, and temptations have all been carefully considered in weighing their evidence, and the results are so given that the reader can easily form conclusions of his own if mine do not satisfy him.

Imagine the history of the conquest written from the Morgan standpoint. The story might be told based on the authority of the chroniclers—it can never otherwise be written; but all that they report in any way conflicting with the preconceived idea must be thrown

out or explained away. Imagine my account of the aborigines announced as *A Description of the Native Races of North America, founded on such parts of existing Spanish Testimony, and on such Material Relics as seem to agree with the researches of Lewis H. Morgan among the Iroquois of New York!* If, after the evidence in the present instance is fully given, the reader prefers denominating the peoples referred to as savages or satyrs, I have not the slightest objection.

With the first expedition to Mexico went two men by the name of 'Diaz, one a priest and the other a soldier. Both wrote accounts of what they saw, thus giving us at the outset narratives from ecclesiastical and secular standpoints. It was a voyage along the coast; they did not penetrate the interior. Observation being general, the descriptions are general. There was nothing remarkable about the priest; he was not particularly intelligent or honest. I see no reason to doubt the commonplace incidents of the voyage as given in the *Itinerario de Grijalva*. The towns, with their white stone buildings and temple-towers glistening in the foliage, remind him of Seville; when he mentions a miracle which happens at one of them, we know he is not telling the truth. Indeed, an experienced judge can almost always arrive at the truth even if the evidence comes only from the mouths of lying witnesses, provided he can examine them apart. Where the evidence is abundant, the judge soon knows more of the facts of the case than any one witness, and can easily discern the true statements from the false. But on the whole, the priest Juan Diaz was quite moderate in his descriptions of what we know from other sources to have been there.

The same evidence is offered in the *Historia Verdadera* of Bernal Diaz, who attended not only on this voyage, but on the first and succeeding expeditions; all is plain, unvarnished, and devoid of coloring. If hyperbole was ever to be employed it should be in



connection with the revelation of these first startling evidences of a new art and a strange race. But the enthusiasm of the author becomes marked only as he ascends later with Cortés to the table-land and there beholds the varied extent of the new culture. What stronger proof can there be of its superior grade when he passes by with comparative indifference the Yucatec specimen, known to us to be of rare beauty, and expresses marked wonder only on reaching Mexico?

Bernal Diaz wrote rather late in life, after many accounts had already been given. He prided himself on giving a true history, was quite as ready to fight with his pen as with his sword, and having had many quarrels, and still harboring many jealousies, was very apt to criticise what others said; and he did so criticise and refute. The truth is, there were here many and opposing elements in the evidence to winnow it of falsehood, far more than are usually found in early materials for history.

The memorials of the relatives of Velazquez to the king are not worth considering, being little more than masses of misstatements and exaggerations.

The personage known as the Anonymous Conqueror, probably Francisco de Terrazas, mayordomo of Cortés, gave a clear description of Mexico, the country, people, towns, and institutions, and particularly the capital city, arranged in paragraphs with proper headings, with drawings of the great temple and of the city. His method and language denote intelligence and inspire confidence. No reason is known why he should exaggerate, many being apparent why he should render a true account. If his testimony can be ruled out on the ground that it does not fit a theory, then can that of any man who furnishes material for history, and our histories may as well be written with the theories as authorities, and have done with it. Dealing wholly with native institutions, the writer seems to have no desire, as is the case with some, to magnify native strength and resources for the

sake of raising the estimate of the deeds of himself and comrades; on the contrary, in speaking of native troops and arms, where a soldier would be most inclined to boast, the description rather moderates the idea of their prowess. The population of Mexico he gives lower than most writers, and yet, when describing the city and its arts, he grows quite eloquent on the size, the beauty, the advanced features. The whole narrative bears the stamp of reliability, and the student may easily from internal evidence and comparison deduct approximate truth.

There are documents, such as *Carta del Ejército* and *Probanza de Lejalde*, attested under oath by hundreds, and therefore apparently worthy of credit above others; but when we examine the motives for their production, and find that they were intended to palliate the conduct of the conquerors, our confidence is shaken.

Hernan Cortés was ever ready with a lie when it suited his purpose, but he was far too wise a man needlessly to waste so useful an agent. He would not, and did not, acquire a name for untruthfulness. He knew that others were writing as well as himself, and it could by no possibility bring him permanent benefit to indulge in much deception. His misstatements chiefly affect himself and his enemies and opponents among his own countrymen; in giving detailed information concerning the natives there was little temptation to deceive. His *Cartas* might naturally be expected to aim at extolling his achievements and the value of his discovery. Expecting some coloring, the student is forewarned. We find at times what we feel inclined to stamp as exaggeration, but here also the enthusiasm of the narrator rises only as he approaches Mexico, the fame of which is dinned into his ears all along his march, and that by the natives nearer the coast, whose high advancement is attested by ruins and relics. Internal and collateral evidence shows his first descriptions of sights to be far from overrated, and his later discoveries to be in the main quite trust-

worthy. Indeed, aware that some of his statements may be doubted, he urges his sovereign more than once to send out a commission to verify them.

Such verification was exacted. Officials did come out to report on the conquest and its value, only to join, in the main, in confirmation of what had been said. A series of questions was also sent to public men in Mexico not long after the conquest, bearing to a great extent on the native culture, and the answers all tend to confirm the high estimate already formed from the specimens and reports forwarded to Spain. One of the most exhaustive answers was sent by the eminent jurist Alonso de Zurita, connected for nearly twenty years with Spanish audiencias in New Spain. He reviews the native institutions with calm and clear judgment, and it is only in rejecting the epithet of barbarians as bestowed by unthinking persons—a term applied also to Europeans by Chinese—that he grows indignant, declaring that none who had any knowledge of Mexican institutions and capacity could use such a term. He spoke while evidences were quite fresh, and well knew what he affirmed. Similar confirmatory evidence may be found massed in the various collections of letters and narratives about the Indies brought to light from the archives of Spain and America, and published by the editors of the extensive *Coleccion de Documentos Inéditos*; *Coleccion de Documentos para la Historia de Mexico*, etc.; by the learned Navarrete, Ramirez, Icazbalceta, Ternaux-Compans, and others.

Still stronger evidence of the reliability of the early authorities comes from the consideration that the rumors of Mexico's grandeur and wealth attracted vast hordes of hungry seekers for gold, grants of land, and office. Of course, most of them were disappointed, and Cortés, from his inability to please and gratify all, raised a host of enemies, who joined the large number already arraigned against him by reason of his successes. Their aim was naturally to vilify



him, to lower the achievements of the conquest, and to detract from the land which had failed to satisfy them. If ever a subject was assailed, it was this of Mexico, her resources and people; assailed, too, during the very opening years of the occupation, when the testimony of eye-witnesses was abundant, and particularly of the disappointed, whose voice was loudest. Notwithstanding all this the glories of Mexico stand unshaken, and greater grow the confirmed ideas of the superior condition of her race in number, culture, and resources; and this, too, when the Spanish government began to discountenance the glowing reports of native superiority, and to lower the estimates of aboriginal wealth and condition, with a view to keep foreign attention from the country, and to hide the facts which would tell against it for crushing a high culture and enslaving a noble race.

Thus it was that the writings of Sahagun, Las Casas, and others, were suppressed or neglected. But if many such were lost, others came finally to light to receive additional confirmation from the native records. It is to these records that we must look not only for confirmation of what the chroniclers relate, but for the only reliable data on political machinery and other esoteric subjects with which Spaniards could not become so well acquainted. The value of native records as supplementary and confirmatory evidence is self-evident, since they were written by and for the natives themselves, and naturally without the idea of exaggeration or deception being dominant. A sufficient number of original and copied native manuscripts or paintings exists in different museums and libraries, relating not only to historic events, but describing the nature and development of institutions and arts.

Besides the actual records, many histories exist, by natives and friars, based wholly on such paintings and on traditions and personal observations, such as those of Tezozomoc, Camargo, and Ixtlilxochitl.

Each of these native authors wrote from a different standpoint, in the interest of his respective government. Camargo, for instance, as a Tlascaltec is bitterly hostile to the Aztecs, and seeks of course to detract from their grandeur in order to raise his own people. He rather avoids dwelling on Aztec glories; nevertheless frequent admissions appear which help to confirm the impression of their advanced institutions. Ixtlilxochitl, again, writes from the family archives of his royal house of Tezcuco, and dwells upon the deeds and grandeur of his city and tribe. None of these authors possess sufficient skill to conceal the coloring which constitutes their chief defect as authorities. A number of chroniclers, and even modern writers like Brasseur de Bourbourg, have used native paintings and narratives more or less for their histories, while certain others, like Veytia, depend upon them or their translations almost wholly.

Ixtlilxochitl was called by Bustamante the Cicero of Anáhuac, and of course is to be taken with allowance in speaking of his people. And so with Father Duran—I would no more trust a zealous priest while defending the natives than I would trust Morgan while defending his theory.

The reliability of translators is best judged by the method used by Father Sahagun in the formation of the *Historia General*, the three volumes of which are devoted to an account of native manners and customs, their domestic and public life, their festivals and rites, their institutions and traits. Instructed by his superiors, the friar called upon intelligent and learned Indians in different places to paint in hieroglyphics their accounts of these subjects. To these, explanations were attached in full Mexican text, and tested by further inquiries, and then translated into Spanish by Sahagun. Many of the narratives are vague and absurd, yet these very faults point in most cases to simple-minded earnestness and frankness, and render the work rather easier for the discriminating



student to sift. The honesty of Sahagun's labors brought upon them obloquy and neglect, which only the more serve to commend the work to us.

It is from such sources, original and translated native records, and verbal and written narrations of eye-witnesses, that succeeding writers, or chroniclers proper, obtained the main portion of their accounts of conquests and aboriginal institutions. They themselves had opportunities for observation; and actuated by different motives, they were naturally impelled to investigate and weigh to a certain extent, whether for zeal of Spanish fame, or with desire to raise the achievements of favorites, or to detract from the glories of envied or detested leaders.

Las Casas, for instance, in his different works stands forward as a pronounced champion of the natives, and unflinchingly lashes the conquerors and historians for what he terms cruelty, unjust policy, and false statement. His *Historia Apologética* is purely a defence of the Indians, their institutions and characteristics, and consequently to be accepted with caution. The need of this caution becomes stronger when we behold the extreme exaggerations to which he is led in the *Breve Relacion*, claiming to be an *exposé* of Spanish excesses and cruelties. In the *Historia de las Indias*, again, he allows his feelings of friendship for Velazquez to detract from the achievements of Cortés. On every hand, therefore, the historian finds reasons for accepting with caution the statements of Las Casas; but thus forewarned, he is able to reject the false and determine the true. He also finds that when not blinded by zeal the worthy bishop is honest, and withal a keen and valuable observer, guided by practical sagacity and endowed with a certain genius.

His contemporary, Oviedo, although less talented, is by no means deficient in knowledge, and a varied experience in both hemispheres had given him a useful insight into affairs. He is not partial to the natives, and Las Casas actually denounces his state-

ments against them as lies. This is hardly just, except in some instances. While personally acquainted only with the region to the south of Nicaragua Lake, his account embraces all Spanish conquests in the western Indies, the facts being gathered from every accessible source, and either compiled or given in separate form. Indian and Spaniard, friend, foe, and rival, all receive a hearing and a record, so that his work is to a great extent a mass of testimony from opposite sides. This to the hasty reader may present a contradictory appearance, as Las Casas is led to assume, but to the student such material is valuable.

A third contemporary and famous writer is Peter Martyr, a man of brilliant attainments, deep clear mind, and honest purpose, who had gained for himself a prominent position in Spain, and even a seat in the Council of the Indies. Naturally interested in the New World, whose affairs were then unfolding, he eagerly questioned those who came thence, consulted their charts and reports, and was thus enabled to form a more accurate opinion about the Indians and their land than their own, based as it was on so much and varied testimony. A fault, however, is the haste with which his summaries were formed, both in order and detail; yet even this defect tends to leave the narrative unvarnished and free from a dangerous elaboration. Even Las Casas admits its credibility.

The different minds, motives, prejudices, and even antagonisms, of these three writers each impart an additional value to their respective writings from which the historian cannot fail to derive benefit.

Like Peter Martyr, Gomara took his material entirely from testimony, chiefly letters, reports, and other documents in the archives of Cortés, his patron, and collections to which his influence gained access. His high literary tastes gave a zest to his writings, but impelled him also to elaboration, and his *Historia de Mexico* is colored by his predilections as biographer

of the conqueror. On the other hand, he finds endorsement in the decree which was issued against his production for its free treatment of government affairs, and comparison with other histories reveals the many valuable points which he has brought to light. The adoption of his Mexican work by so prominent a native as Chimalpain is to a certain extent an assurance of its truthfulness.

Muñoz places Gomara among the first of the chroniclers. He had no special reason that we can see to extol unduly native institutions. He wrote early enough to know all about them, but not so early as to be carried away by a first enthusiasm. Made secretary and chaplain to Cortés in 1540, his object of adulation was his patron, in recounting whose deeds he cannot be trusted. Neither had Cortés, as before remarked, special interest, least of all at this time, in magnifying the civilization—the civilization he had destroyed. Alvarado and others of the chroniclers were repeatedly tried by the Spanish government for their cruelty to the natives, whom it was the desire of both church and state to preserve. It would therefore be rather in their favor for the conquerors to hold them up as ignoble and low.

The learned and elegant Antonio de Solís, though so bigoted as to render his deductions in many instances puerile, and though constantly raving against the natives, was closely followed by both Robertson and Prescott.

Herrera, the historiographer of the Indies, uses the material of all the preceding writers, in addition to original narratives, and has in his *Historia General* the most complete account of American affairs up to his time. His method of massing material makes it most valuable, but a slavish adherence to chronology destroys the sequence, interferes with broad views, and renders the reading uninteresting. This defect is increased by a bald, prolix style, the effect of inexperienced aid, and by the extreme patriotism and piety

which often set aside integrity and humanity. On the other hand, he in some measure tempered and corrected the exaggerations of his predecessors.

Torquemada was less critical in accepting material, but he was indefatigable in his efforts to exhaust the information about New Spain and her natives, and his *Monarquía Indiana* is the most complete account extant on its combination of topics. Though an able work, it contains many errors; yet the manifold sources of information all the more help the student to arrive at the truth. Torquemada amassed a great deal of private information about native institutions during the fifty years of his labor among the Indians, and he made use of many histories then unpublished—instance those of Sahagun, Mendieta, and others.

Mendieta was an ardent champion of the natives, and a bitter opponent of the audiencia and government officials, yet in mundane affairs he possessed sound judgment, so much so that he was frequently intrusted with important missions of a diplomatic nature. He became the historian of his *provincia*, and gained the title of its Cicero. His *Historia Eclesiástica*, which treats chiefly of the missionary progress of his order, contains a great deal of matter on native customs, arts, and traits.

Mendieta may be regarded as the pupil of Toribio de Benavente, whose humility of spirit caused him to adopt the name of Motolinia, applied by the Indians out of commiseration for his appearance. Not that he was very humble in all matters, as may be seen from his bitter attack on Las Casas. In this instance, however, he was merely an exponent of the hostility prevailing between the Franciscans, to which he belonged, and the Dominicans, which led to many pen contests and contradictory measures for the Indians, from all of which the historian gains new facts. Motolinia arrived in Mexico in 1524, and wandered over it and the countries to the south for a series of years, teaching and converting. He is claimed to have



baptized over four hundred thousand persons. His knowledge of the aborigines and long intercourse with them before their customs were changed, enabled him to acquire most important information about them. All this, together with the story of his mission work, is related in the *Historia de los Indios de Nueva España*, written in a rambling manner, with a naïve acceptance of the marvellous, yet bearing a stamp of truthfulness that wins confidence.

Occasionally there have risen writers who, from excess of zeal, personal ambition, or careless study of facts, sought to cast doubts on native culture and similar topics, like De Pau and Raynal, only to evoke replies more or less hasty. This unsatisfactory contest roused the ire, among others, of the learned Jesuit Clavigero. Himself born in Mexico, his patriotic zeal was kindled, and during a residence there of thirty-five years, till driven forth by the general edict against his order, he made the ancient history and institutions thereof his special study. The result was the *Storia Antica del Messico*, which if less bulky than Torquemada's work, is far more satisfactory in its plan for thoroughness and clearness, and remains the leading authority in its field. Clavigero is generally admitted to have refuted the two prominent opponents above named on the culture questions, even though his statements are at times colored with the heat of argument and with zeal for race.

Among the remaining historians who treat on civilized tribes may be named Acosta, who in speaking of Mexican culture borrows wholly from Duran, a Franciscan, born in New Spain of a native mother, and consequently predisposed in favor of his race. Indeed, nearly all of Duran's bulky narrative on ancient history and institutions is not only from native sources, but from a native standpoint. Vetancurt, who agrees mainly with Torquemada, follows both native and Spanish versions. Benzoni offers a good deal of personal observation on Central American



Indians and affairs, but copies hearsay when he touches on Mexico. Writers on special districts are also numerous. Bishop Landa wrote on Yucatan and its culture, and is accused of having given forth an invented alphabet as the Maya. Cogolludo adds much to his accounts, while Fuentes, Remesal, Vasquez, Villagutierre, and Juarros exhaust the adjoining fields of Chiapas and Guatemala. Thence northward the circle may be continued with Burgoa's works on Oajaca, Beaumont's on Michoacan, Mota Padilla's on Nueva Galicia, Arlegui's on Zacatecas, Ribas' on Sinaloa; and so forth.

Descriptions of the chroniclers and their works might be carried to almost any extent, but sufficient has been given, I trust, to prove their testimony, taken as a whole, closely sifted and carefully weighed, to be quite as worthy of credence as that from which history is usually derived. I cannot throw to the winds such testimony in order that certain speculators may the better win converts to their fancy.

The traducers of Aztec culture and its chroniclers have evidently failed in that most important point of carefully reading, comparing, and analyzing the authorities which they so recklessly condemn as a mass of fiction or exaggeration. It seems to me ridiculous for the superficial readers of a few books to criticise the result of such thorough researches as Prescott's, and even to sweep them all away with one contemptuous breath. I for one can testify to Prescott's general fairness and accuracy. His researches and writings are beyond all comparison with those of any modern theorist. Others also have read, compared, and analyzed the authorities on Mexico, perhaps even more than Prescott, for fresh documents have appeared since his time; and while some errors and discrepancies have been discovered, yet in the main neither Nahuatl culture nor the chronicles and records describing it can be said to have been misrepresented or exaggerated by him.

The very discrepancies in the accounts of different chroniclers, which to the experienced observer indicate genuineness and truthfulness, are paraded by the superficial reader as proof of falsity. The chroniclers have for centuries been exposed to numerous and severe ordeals of critique, and their respective defects and merits have been widely discussed; but on the whole these discussions tend to confirm the statements which I have given, some of the strongest testimony being found in their very differences and blunders. Thus not even their bigotry, then so strong and wide-spread, their simplicity, their prejudices in different directions, none of these can conceal the truth or its main features, although occasional points may still remain hidden under a false coloring. The rigid censorship exercised in Spain over all writings led to the suppression of many works, but the main effort was to suppress heterodoxy and unfavorable reflections on Spanish policy, and if culture questions were touched, to lower the estimate thereof in order to cover vandalism.

While thoroughly convinced that we have in the early American chroniclers a solid foundation for history, as before stated I do not by any means accept as truth all they say; I do not accept half of what some say, while others I find it difficult to believe at all. Upon this basis, then—that is, on the basis of truth and well sifted facts—I will present a few of the leading characteristics of the Nahua and Maya peoples, sufficient in my opinion to justify their claim, as the world goes, to be called civilized.

Whether those who thus affect to disbelieve in Aztec culture, including such men as Lewis Cass and R. A. Wilson, advocate an Old World origin for some of the advanced features does not matter, for there is absolutely no evidence for such origin beyond resemblances which may be traced between nations throughout the world; on the other hand, there are

strong internal evidences of the autochthonic origin of some of the highest features of this civilization, such as hieroglyphics and many branches of the higher arts. Besides, the existence or non-existence of these advanced arts is the point in question, not whence they came.

The city of Mexico presents many features of advanced urban life under Aztec occupation, not alone as related by chroniclers, but as proved by incidental details in the account of the sieges of and by the Spaniards, and by the ruins. Humboldt found distinct traces of the old city, extending in some directions far beyond the present actual limits; and the numerous and substantial causeways which led to it for several miles through the lake prove that it must have been of great extent. The causeways, though now passing over dry land, are still in use, and reveal their solidity. Any one who will carefully read the military report and other accounts of the long and hard siege must become impressed with the vast extent and strength of the city; the large number and size of its temple pyramids affirm the same. Through an aqueduct of masonry several miles long it was supplied with water, which was distributed by pipes, and by boatmen. Light-houses guided the lake traffic; a large body of men kept the numerous canals in order, swept the streets, and sprinkled them. The houses were, many of them, large and well built. The emperor's palace contained many suites of rooms designed for individual occupation, not at all like anything in New Mexico. Temple-towers and turrets were frequent, proving that structures several stories in height were in use.

Among the Nahuas the several branches of art were under control of a council or academy, with a view to promote development of poetry, music, oratory, painting, and sculpture, though chiefly literary arts, and to check the production of defective work. Before this council poems and essays were recited, and inventions exhibited.

If distortion assumes prominence in a large class of models instead of ideal beauty, this must be attributed to the peculiarity and cruelty of certain Aztec institutions, which stamp their traits on subjective art.

Beauty of outline is nevertheless common, notably in the rich ornamentation to be seen on ruins, and on art relics transmitted in large numbers to Spain by the conquerors. The friezes or borders equal the Grecian in elegant outline and combination. The well known calendar stone contains in itself a vast number of beautiful designs. Some of the vases in the museums at Mexico and Washington surpass the Etruscan in beauty of form and in tasteful decorations. Again, the terra-cotta heads picked up round Teotihuacan, some of which I have in my possession, exhibit a most truthful delineation of the human face, with considerable expression, and are of actual beauty.

Other admirable specimens are the female Aztec idol in the British Museum, the mosaic knife with its human figure from Christy's collection, the skin-clad Aztec priest, the Ethiopian granite head, the beautiful head from Mitla, and the grotesque figures from the Mexican gulf. Such specimens suffice to establish the existence of a high degree of art among the Nahuas.

As for the advance exhibited by adjoining races, one glance at the numerous artistic designs and groupings on Yucatan ruins must command admiration, which rises as the observer examines the monuments at Palenque, with their extent of massive edifices, their advanced mode of construction, their galleries, their arches, their fine façade and interior ornamentation, and above all, their numerous human figures of absolute beauty in model. This applies also to some terra-cotta relics from the same quarter.

Ornamental work in gold and silver had reached a perfection which struck the Spaniards with admiration, and much of the metal obtained by them was given to native smiths to shape into models and set-



tings. Many pieces sent to Europe were pronounced superior to what Old World artists could then produce. Birds and other animals were modelled with astonishing exactness, and furnished with movable wings, legs, and tongues. The so-called 'lost art' of casting parts of the same object of different metals was known; thus fishes were modelled with alternate scales of gold and silver. Copper and other metals were gilded by a process which would have made the fortune of a goldsmith in Europe. Furnaces, perhaps of earthen-ware, and blowpipes, are depicted on native paintings in connection with gold-working.

Although there had been but little progress in mining, yet a beginning appears to have been made to obtain metals and minerals from the solid rock, and melting, casting, hammering, and carving were in use among goldsmiths and other workers, as shown in native paintings. This is one of the strongest proofs that the Nahuas were in a progressive civilization, not at a stand-still nor retrograding, for such mining and melting methods must surely lead to the discovery of iron ere they stopped. Cutting implements were made of copper alloyed with tin, and tempered to great hardness. Yet stone tools were still chiefly used, particularly those of obsidian, from which mirrors were also made, equal in reflecting power to those of Europe at that time, it was said. Softer stone being chiefly used, flint implements sufficed for the sculptor; yet specimens exist in hard stone. Precious stones were cut with copper tools, with the aid of silicious sand, and carved in forms of animals. Specimens of their art in stone and metal were received in Europe, where chroniclers of different minds and impulses write in ecstasy over workmanship which in so many instances surpassed in excellence that of Spain. The fabrics and feather-work were equally admired for fineness of texture, brilliancy of coloring, and beauty of arrangement and form. So accurate were the representations of animals in relief

and drawing as to serve the naturalist Hernandez for models.

The Nahua paintings show little artistic merit, because the figures have necessarily to be conventional, for better intelligence, as were the Egyptian hieroglyphics. This necessity naturally cramped art. But while the Egyptians carried the conventionality even to sculpture and painting generally, the Nahuas clung to it closely only in their writings; and it needs but a glance at many specimens among ruins and relics to see that considerable skill had been reached in delineating even the human form and face in plastic material, for in painting the development was small. An art, however, which approached that of painting was the formation of designs and imitation of animal forms, and even faces, with feathers—feather-mosaic—so beautifully done that the feather-pictures are declared by wondering Spaniards to have equalled the best works of European painters. Specimens are still to be seen in museums. The artist would often spend hours, even days, in selecting and adjusting one feather in order to obtain the desired shade of color.

Fabrics were made of cotton, of rabbit-hair, or of both mixed, or with feather admixture. The rabbit-hair fabrics were pronounced equal in finish and texture to silk. The fibres of maguey and palm leaves were used for coarser cloth. Paper in long narrow sheets was made chiefly of maguey fibres, and though thick, the surface was smooth. Gums appear to have been used for cohesion. Parchment was also used. Skins were tanned by a process not described, but the result is highly praised. In dyeing they appeared to have excelled Europeans, and cochineal and other dyes have been introduced among us from them. Many of their secrets in this art have since been lost.

There is little doubt that the palaces of the rulers were of immense extent, and provided with manifold comforts and specimens of art. Numerous divisions

existed for harems, private rooms, reception and state rooms, guard-rooms, servants' quarter, storehouses, gardens, and menageries. The chroniclers speak of walls faced with polished marble and jasper; of balconies supported by monoliths, of sculptures and carvings, of tapestry brilliant in colors and fine in texture, of censers with burning perfume. The admitted excellence in arts and wealth, the possession of rare stones and metals, permits to some extent the belief in a Hall of Gold, Room of Emeralds, and so forth, which the chroniclers place within the palaces.

The menagerie at Mexico was large and varied, and the many beautifully laid out gardens in all parts of the country, some devoted to scientific advancement, denote a high status in natural history.

Throughout the narratives of the chroniclers the Aztec ruler receives the title of emperor, which it was not the custom of the conquerors to give unadvisedly. It was almost a sacred title in their eyes, their own sovereign being so called, and they were not likely to apply that title to a common Indian chief. Indeed, the native records relate that Montezuma II. after many conquests assumed the title emperor, or ruler, of the world. In two of the Nahua kingdoms the succession was lineal and hereditary, and fell to the eldest legitimate son, those born of concubines or lesser wives being passed over. In Mexico election prevailed, but the choice was restricted to one family. The system resembled very much that of the electoral German empire. Each of these rulers was expected to confer with a council, the number and composition of whose members are not quite satisfactorily established. Executive government was intrusted to regularly appointed officials and tribunals. In Tlascala a parliament composed of the nobility and headed by the four lords determined the affairs of government.

The native records indicate a number of classes and orders among nobles, officials, and warriors. The highest were the feudal lords, as in Tezcucō, whose

position corresponded very much to that of the mighty baron of Germany in former times, all kept from defying the supreme ruler by a balancing of power, by private jealousies, and later by the ruler increasing their numbers, and thus closely attaching to himself a large proportion, and by obliging others to constantly reside in the capital, either to form a council or on other pretences. Another means for controlling the haughty feudal lord, and indeed a step toward abolishing their power, was to divide the kingdom into sixty-five departments, whose governors were nearly all creatures of the king. The population of certain districts was moved in part to other districts, or made to receive inwanderers, both operations tending to give the king greater control. Instances of such master-strokes of policy as are related in aboriginal records serve to show the power of the monarch and the advanced system of government.

In Mexico the people had had access in a great measure to military, civil, and court offices, but with the enthronement of Montezuma II. the nobles managed to obtain exclusive access to nearly all dignities. This reform naturally served to alienate the people and to aid in the downfall of the empire.

The list of royal officials is imposing in its length, and is vouched for not only by the minute account of the titles and duties of the dignitaries, but by the many incidental allusions to them and their acts in the native records of events. The list embraces offices corresponding to minister of war, who was also commander-in-chief, minister of finance, grand master of ceremonies, grand chamberlain, superintendent of arts, etc. There were also military orders, corresponding to the knights of mediæval Europe, while the church had its gradations of priests, guardians, deacons, friars, nuns, and probationers.

Several tribunals existed, each with a number of appointed judges and a staff of officials; and appeals could be carried from one to the other, and finally to



the supreme judge, who was without a colleague. In the wards were elected magistrates, who judged minor cases in the first instance, and an inferior class of justices, assisted by bailiffs and constables. Some courts had jurisdiction over matters relating only to taxes and their collectors, others over industries and arts. Cases were conducted with the aid not alone of verbal testimony under oath, but of paintings, representing documents; and names, evidence, and decisions were recorded by clerks. Whether advocates were employed is not clear, but the judges were skilled in cross-examination, and many a perjury was proved, followed by the penalty of death. Suits were limited to eighty days. Bribery was strictly forbidden. The judges were selected from the higher class, the superior from relatives of the kings, and held office for life, sustained by ample revenues. Adultery and similar crimes were severely punished.

Land was divided in different proportions, the largest owned by king and nobles, and the remainder by the temples and communities of the people. All such property was duly surveyed, and each estate accurately marked on maps or paintings, kept on file by district officials. Each class of landed estate had then its distinctive color and name, and from each owner or tenant was exacted tribute in product or service, regular or occasional. Portions of the crown land were granted to usufructuaries and their heirs for service rendered and to be rendered. In conquered provinces a certain territory was set aside for the conqueror and cultivated by the people for his benefit. The estates of the nobles were, many of them, of ancient origin, and often entailed, which fact establishes to a certain extent the private ownership of land. These feudatories paid no rent, but were bound to render service to the crown with person, vassals, and property, when called upon. The people's land belonged to the wards of the towns or villages, with perpetual and inalienable tenure. Individual

members of the ward were on demand assigned portions for use, and could even transmit the control thereof to heirs, but not sell. Certain conditions must be observed for the tenure of such lands, and the observance was watched over by a council of elders or its agents.

There is much in this to confirm the resemblances to the feudal system of Europe already noticed. The exactness of the information on land tenure is confirmed by investigations instituted under auspices of the Spanish government with a view to respect the rights of the natives, so far as the claims of conquerors and settlers permitted. Cortés obtained from the native archives and officials copies of the estate maps, and tax lists, by which he was guided in his distribution of land and collection of tribute.

In the department of the minister of finance, and in the offices of the numerous tax collectors, were kept hieroglyphic lists of the districts, towns, and estates, designating the kind and quantity of tax to be paid by each, in product or service. A copy of such a list is given by Lorenzana, and others are reproduced in the Codex Mendoza, and other collections. Certain cities had to supply the palaces with laborers and servants, food and furniture, fabrics and other material; others paid their service and products regularly to the finance department, or when called upon. Manufacturers and merchants paid in the kind they possessed, and artisans often in labor. The tenants of nobles tilled land for their own benefit, and paid rent in a certain amount of labor for the landlord, and in military service when called upon; besides this, they paid tribute in kind to the crown, the produce being stored away in magazines in the nearest towns.

There were nearly four hundred tributary towns in the Mexican empire, some paying taxes several times a month, others less often, and still others only once a year, the amount being in many instances over

a third of everything produced. Custom-houses also existed for exacting duties.

In the capitals of the provinces resided chief treasurers, each with a corps of collectors, who not only enforced the payment of taxes but watched that lands were kept under cultivation and industries generally maintained.

To illustrate the extent to which organization entered into the affairs of life, we can point to the merchants, with their guilds, apprenticeship, caravans, markets, fairs, agencies, and factories in distant regions. Tlatelulco was renowned for her trade and vast market, and her merchants really formed a commercial corporation controlling the trade of the country. Sahagun's records sketch the development of this company. Maps guided them in their journeys, tribunals of their own regulated affairs, and different articles were accepted as a medium for exchange, including copper and tin pieces, and gold-dust. The market at Tlatelulco, in the vast extent of booths, and of articles for sale, and in its regulations, was a source of wonder to the Spaniards. Couriers and inns existed to aid travel and intercourse; also roads, well kept and often paved, such as late exploration in Yucatan shows to have connected distant cities. In navigation the Mexicans were less advanced

One lawful wife was married with special ceremonies, and her children were the only legitimate issue. Three additional classes of mates were admissible: those bound to the man with less solemn ceremonies, and bearing the title of wife, like the legitimate one, yet deprived of inheritance or nearly so, together with their children; those bound with no ceremonies, and ranking merely as concubines; and those who cohabited with unmarried men, and who might be married by their lovers or by other men. These two classes of concubines were not entitled to the respect accorded to the first-named, yet no dishonor attached to their condition. Public prostitutes were tolerated

as a necessary evil. This is a social condition which needs not for its justification to seek a parallel among other nations recognized as civilized, nor among the European princes who publicly maintained the same classes of consorts and mistresses.

Schools existed in connection with the temple, under control of the priests, and in Mexico every quarter had its school for the common people, after the manner of our public schools. Higher schools or colleges existed for sons of nobles and those destined for the priesthood, wherein were taught history, religion, philosophy, law, astronomy, writing, and interpreting hieroglyphics, singing, dancing, use of arms, gymnastics, and many arts and sciences. A result of this high training may be found in the many botanical and zoölogical collections in the country, and the promotion of art in sculpture, weaving, feather ornaments, and jewelry, by the nobles and the wealthy.

Picture-writing is practised to a certain extent by all savages, both in representative and symbolic form, but it is only by studying the art, or following its development to a higher grade, that it acquires permanent value, or can be made the means to gain for its possessors the culture stamp of keeping records, and records were kept by the Nahuas. They had advanced to some extent even in the phonetic form of picture-writing, but had not reached the alphabetic grade. Any codex will show in abundance the representative and symbolic signs, and some that are phonetic. In religious and astrologic documents the signs vary so greatly that the theory has been strongly asserted that the priests used a partially distinct symbolic system for certain records. When studying church forms under the missionaries the natives used phonetic signs to aid their memory in remembering abstract words, a method also recognized in the preserved paintings for designation of names. The system is apparently of native origin. The Maya writing is still more phonetic in its character.



The Nahua records, in hieroglyphic characters, include traditional and historical annals, with names and genealogic tables of kings and nobles, lists and tribute rolls of provinces and towns, land titles, law codes, court records, calendar, religious rules and rites, educational and mechanical processes, etc. The hieroglyphic system was known in its ordinary application to the educated classes, while the priests alone understood it fully. The characters were painted in bright colors, on long strips of paper, cloth, or parchment, or carved in stone. Original specimens on stone and paper or skin exist to prove the efficiency of the system for all ordinary requirements, and to establish for the race that high index of culture, the possession of written annals. The Spanish authorities for a long time had to appeal to them to settle land and other suits, and to fix taxes, etc. The several codices in European libraries and museums, with their early and recent interpretation, have added much valuable material to ancient history; Ixtlilxochitl and others built their histories mainly on such paintings.

The Nahuas were well acquainted with the movements of the sun, moon, and of some planets, and observed and recorded eclipses, though not attributing them to natural causes. Their calendar divided time into ages of two cycles, each cycle consisting of four periods of thirteen years, the years of each cycle being distinctly designated by signs and names with numbers, in orderly arrangement, as shown on their sculptured stones. The civil year was divided into eighteen months of twenty days, with five extra days to complete the year; and each month into four sections or weeks. Extra days were also added at the end of the cycle, so that our calculations are closely approached. The day was divided into fixed periods corresponding to hours. All the above divisions had their signs and names. The ritual calendar was lunar, with twenty weeks of thirteen days for the year, all differing in their enumeration, though the names of

the days were the same as in the solar calendar. The system of numeration was simple and comprehensive, without limit to the numbers that could be expressed; and so were the signs for them. It was essentially decimal.

These are some few instances of Nahua culture which might easily be extended to fill a volume after all exaggeration has been thrown out; and all this, be it remembered, was the condition of things four hundred years ago. Compare it with the European civilization or semi-civilization of that day on the one hand, and with the savagism of the Iroquois and Ojibways on the other, and then judge which of the two it most resembled.

It is with regret that I find myself obliged to speak of two reviews of the first volume of my *History of the Pacific States*. They were so different in tone and temper from two hundred others appearing about the same time, as to excite in the mind of an ordinary observer suspicion of a hidden motive. I think I shall have no difficulty in showing what that motive was; in which case it will not leave either the reviewers, or the editors admitting to their columns such articles, in a very favorable light among fair-minded men.

I first heard of Lewis H. Morgan as a person going about from one reviewer to another begging condemnation for my *Native Races*. His object I could not imagine. Some time afterward one of these reviewers, whose letter I still have, wrote me regretting the circumstance, for though a follower of Morgan he was an honorable man, and gave my book conscientious treatment. Later I learned that Morgan was angry because I omitted his book from my list of authorities, and did not subscribe to his doctrine. The book was not in my possession at the time, and I had never heard of his theory. I regarded the matter as of little moment, and soon it dropped from my mind. I certainly entertained no feeling for or against Mr Morgan; and as for his theory, when making a summary of forty or fifty others, none of which I was prepared fully to accept, and desiring the catalogue to be as complete as possible, I would hardly have left out his because of my inability to believe it all. This is yet more apparent in view of the fact that I have no conflicting theory of my own, that I object to no one's fancies, and that I regard the Morgan hypothesis as exceedingly innocent, except where it attempts the overthrow of material truths. I cannot entertain a belief in opposition to the testimony of my senses; I cannot support an unprovable proposition as against a provable one. Nor did I take exceptions to Morgan's notice of the *Native Races* in the *North American Review*. It was open; the portions objected to were arrayed and combated, and the other portions were not generally slurred. He did not attack the author in a sweeping way,

while attempting to bring him into disrepute by artfully covering the real cause of his antagonism. In this respect he was a better man than some of his successors.

The years passed by with but little thought on my part upon these things. Occasionally one of my assistants would call attention to a work by one of the Morgan school, in which traces of a free use of the *Native Races* were plainly visible without a word of credit. To such slights, however, I am not at all sensitive. It is the primary object of all my efforts that they may be of use to the world. The matter of credit is an exceedingly small one, to be left to the taste and sense of justice of the person using it. For myself I prefer to cite my sources of information fully, as my pages show. I certainly never obtained any information or ideas from the men of Morgan that I did not give them credit for. In the present instance we survived the heavy blow, and were glad if the shade of the great chief could be thus appeased.

For meanwhile Morgan had departed to his happy hunting-ground, and in his place had arisen a school of followers, among whom, as is usual in such cases, there were fanatics seven times more the children of darkness than had been the master. The more radical of these seized upon the weird fancies that sometime floated through the brain of their dead chief and wove them into what they regarded as tangible realities, while others accepted Morgan's hypotheses only in part. Happy indeed must have been that great soul which from its celestial wilderness beheld the cloud of dust that it had raised! The speculations contained in his works now to some became words of inspiration, and the writer himself the founder of a new faith. There was to be a new departure in science, literature, and art; learning was to be revolutionized; and the originator of the new doctrine, which was a true revelation from heaven, was to be deified. All who accepted his words were to be received in due time into the happy hunting-ground; all who did not were anathema maranatha.

We must not wonder too greatly at the occasional foolishness of wise men. There are those high in position, able and learned in some directions, who are shallow-pated enough in others. It is not out of the ordinary course of things to find among Morgan's disciples some learned and able men. However we may wonder at it, the proposition is none the less true, that there never has been set on foot a doctrine so illogical or a dogma so absurd as not to find adherents and champions among the so-called wise of this world. There is no question that to-day, as at any time since men were made, there cannot be concocted a system of theology so extravagant but that supporters may be found for it among the studious. It has always been so, and judging from present appearances it will always be so. It is not necessary to cite examples; history is full of them. The very fact that the proposition is unreasonable prompts some to lay aside their reason. The more acute and powerful the mind, the more studious it may become over unprovable hypotheses, and the more forced to resort to strange conceits and wild delusions. Take the sages of antiquity and tell me what the opinions entertained by them upon the origin of things and the future state of man are worth to the world to-day. Peradventure some of the followers of Morgan may be so fortunate as to be classed a thousand years hence among the sages of antiquity.



Without referring to the close students of alchemy or astrology for examples, or stopping to consider the effect of the application of brain power to traditional formulas, we have only to notice the totally opposite views taken on every problem of life and death by the foremost intellects of the age to be aware that it is possible for the modern scholar to entertain views favorable to the subordination of sense to aboriginal consanguinities. Nor is the success of a new delusion according to the measure of its subtilities, or governed by the plausibility of its hypotheses; it will be believed according to the force with which it is proclaimed. The nature of the scheme presented and the power of discrimination on the part of the recipient have less to do with its promulgation than the teacher's strength of brain and body. This accounts for our finding among the followers of Morgan some intelligent and able men, some who occupy conspicuous positions, and are looked up to as models of refined human intelligence. The very strength and elasticity of the mind accepting fancy as a substitute for fact often plunge the possessor farther and farther into the mazes of infatuation. It is not always proof of a proposition that an able mind entertains it. The savage can see as far into a granite boulder as the sage.

Thus it will be seen that for several years I rested under the wrath of Morgan's men without knowing it. At length the first volume of my *History* was published. This was the hour of sweet revenge! It had not been unlooked for, nor were the holy brotherhood unprepared. Allusion in a bibliographical note to the folly of throwing to the winds testimony as good as that upon which rests the history of any nation, was sufficient to rouse the refined demon of the new dispensation. "This book must be put down, the author annihilated: we have praised him hitherto; now we will sapiently sit upon him. For if his work be permitted to stand, ours must fall; if his chronicles are to remain as recognized foundations of American history, then our beloved dogma must be buried." He who formerly was a man of independent thought and action, a patient laborer in a praiseworthy field, winning the approbation of eastern and European scholars, is now an upstart, a presumptuous fellow, unworthy to touch the sacred garments of this guild. His formerly intelligent and able assistants are now sneered at and ridiculed; the very richness of his materials, the handling of which elicited wonder, is now transformed into a great gulf which in due time is to swallow this huge Californian undertaking. Of this concerted and predetermined course of action, in effect, I was credibly informed.

For their first shot the columns of the *New York Independent* were used. The attack was so vehement, however, as to defeat its own purpose. It was clearly apparent that fairly to point out the merits and demerits of the work was not the writer's purpose, but on the contrary to hide all that was good, distort the truth, and magnify trivial matters so that they should appear great faults; and to the thoughtful reader the wonder was if either the writer of the article or the editor of the journal ever had been taught to distinguish right and wrong or carried a conscience. What an egregious blunder the leading journals of New York and Boston, of Chicago, St Louis, Cincinnati, and San Francisco, to say nothing of those of Europe—what a blunder they had made in reviewing this volume to speak well of it! I do not suppose the



editor of the *Independent* wishes to plead ignorance for admitting sweeping and untruthful denunciation and attempting to pass it off on his readers as fair criticism, which would be equivalent to an acknowledgment on his part of his unfitness for the position, or that he would admit himself to be capable of wilful misrepresentation in printing what he knew to be false, which course would be to place himself outside the category of good men; yet one or the other of these positions he is bound to take.

I do not propose to follow this reviewer and notice his misstatements; the article cannot be placed in the category of reputable criticism. It was simply mud-throwing. I will point out a few features of it, however, that we may see how the thing is done. "It was a very difficult book to review," the editor remarked afterward, "a very difficult book. There were but few who would undertake it." So it would seem; and the one who did undertake it was not long in showing his ignorance of the subject. First, no criticism was attempted of the history proper; not a word was said about it in the whole five columns of disparagement. One half of the article was devoted to a general tirade against the book, and personal abuse of the author; the other half was given to astute hair-splitting over a summary of voyages, printed in fine type, not directly connected with the subject of the volume, and wherein the author expressly disavows the intention to make it exhaustive. Here in some cases the reviewer was right but not original, for he always artfully concealed the fact that the note was not offered as an exhaustive treatise on American geography, but simply as a résumé from a dozen well known authorities named. While endeavoring to convey the idea of gross inaccuracy, he failed to show that I did not do accurately everything that I attempted.

There is nothing which so enrages an erudite dogmatist as to meet an opinion positively expressed in direct opposition to his own positive opinion. And the more extravagant the doctrine, the more enraged is the biassed mind over it. It is not simply the real and tangible that men most dispute, but the hypothetical and unknowable. It requires no discussion to prove the presence of the palpable, but for the impalpable men will lay down their lives. Pure, unreasoning, and unreasonable fantasy has set on foot most of the battles of the world. Men fight over fancies, not facts.

Another article of similar import appeared in the *New York Post* and *Nation*. Recognizing the excess of zeal on the part of the *Independent* reviewer, the *Post* article between its spasms of spleen threw in clauses of praise. I would advise the Morgan men to exercise care in their commendations, else every evil charge they make will be contradicted by one member or another of the guild, and thus their united efforts fall to the ground. An air of moderation is here assumed, but only that the book may be damaged the more. A number of the Morgan men are mentioned by name as martyrs to science, victims of my crushing silence. The ignorance of the reviewer in regard to Pacific coast history, of which he pretends to know so much more than one who has made it the special study of a lifetime, is nowhere more clearly shown than when complaining of the omission from my list of authorities of certain of the men of Morgan. The works of two of the writers named appeared among the authorities for the *Native Races*; one was omitted as already explained; the rest wrote on ethnological and antiquarian topics,

after the list was printed, and I may be excused for not foreseeing their investigations. Of course they do not appear in the list for the *History of Central America*, for the good reason that not one of them so far as I know has written a word on the subject! The article closes with a few flat denials of any Aztec or Maya culture, the common argument of the school.

A fit sequel to the *Post* article was the admission into its columns, of certain statements by an irresponsible and unprincipled person, who with a view of extorting money or obtaining notoriety, concocted a series of falsehoods, intermingled with facts so warped as to make them appear to my disadvantage, all which if true would amount to nothing. It was my method of writing history that troubled him, poor fellow, and he thought my assistants were imposed upon. But after all he was but an auxiliary of the *Post*, and with such a person I have no issue. There are always at hand those who for money or notoriety will not hesitate to concoct lies, and labor with others to make them appear plausible, as this person has done. If my work or my reputation rested on a sandy foundation, if I feared him in the least, or the *Post*, or the men of Morgan, perhaps I should have paid him his price and stopped his bark. As it was I desired the matter should go on; I preferred to know what they were trying to do, what they expected to gain by it all, and if indeed by such means I and my work could be brought to grief.

Charges like these, and emanating from such a source, were as I said a fit sequel to the first attack, and very properly admitted into his columns by the editor. "First we will condemn the book, and then annihilate the author; so that there shall be none in all the earth to stand before the men of Morgan." A prominent New York publisher denied the statements for me as palpably false; but he need not have taken the trouble. There was not a subscriber of ordinary intelligence but saw through the editor's artifice by this time. He had admitted from one of the men of Morgan a defamatory article, and now a few more stalwart strokes and the western coast of North America would be overturned into the sea. It only lacked some such effusions as these from this most worthy coadjutor to show the real purpose of the paper in admitting the review. But for this proceeding on the part of the editor there might have been some who really would have thought that the reviewer had intended to be sincere regarding his very intelligent and learned remarks about the book. I will admit that the ethics which obtain in such cases, particularly the *Post's* morality, are beyond me; but I will say that in commercial matters, a man who showed such an utter disregard for truth and fair conduct as did the editor of the *Post* in this case, would be ruled out of any respectable society of merchants. The responsibility cannot be thrown upon the accomplice under cover of communications. It was the admission of the false statements into the columns of the journal that did the injury, and not the writing of them. And this editor knew them in the main to be false; or if he had entertained doubts, he might easily have ascertained the truth; but from the course of proceedings it seems evident that truth was exactly what he did not want. During a business career lasting from boyhood I have been well known both on the Pacific coast and at the east, and neither my life nor my acts have been hidden or secret. My Library and its details have always been open to the public, and my system has been a thousand times ex-

plained, verbally and in the newspapers and magazines; and before publishing a volume I personally visited the leading literary men at the east, laid before them the scheme with my plan for its accomplishment, and received their warm commendations, ample proof of which I can produce both from the persons themselves, and from their letters in my possession.

My historical undertakings are such as in all civilized and half-civilized societies are deemed important. For this western coast if the work was ever to be fully done it must be done at once, as much valuable knowledge was daily dropping out of existence, and there was no government or society at hand ready to save it. Nor would gathering alone satisfy me. It seemed evident that unless I went on and placed the large unwieldy mass in form available to the world, it would be long before any one else would do so.

Whoever or whatever the author may be, there are points about the work which truth cannot gainsay. Among these are diligence in collecting material, and great thoroughness in correctly bringing out all the facts and arranging them in natural sequence. That this is true, and that vast stores of information would but for me have been lost, and that no such work has been done for other nations, can be made clear to any ordinary mind. And this as I regard it, is nine tenths of history. Style, ways of working, the use of big words or little words, and like matters of comparatively minor moment may always be distorted into material for ridicule; though in my own case even here, where one man has spoken evil, fifty, ay a hundred, each as capable of judging truly as are my learned friends of the *Post*, have expressed approval.

My plan of historical labor is my own, and grew out of the necessities of the case; the collection was made and the work begun and carried on by myself alone, without government or other aid, or any thought of it. The importance of the work itself it is impossible to estimate too highly; and that I ask or desire from the public any consideration for myself further than I deserve is so preposterous, the idea of it so repugnant to my nature, so inconsistent with a life of retirement and self-sacrifice, that I should have paid no attention to these slanders had they not come from so-called respectable sources. The proposition was simply this: In order to accomplish within a lifetime the labor for one man of two hundred years assistants must be employed. My work is not of that quality that one man could do it in forty or fifty years. I could do much, but not all. Every one knows that it is more difficult to do work by the hand of another than by one's own hand. My assistants are my friends, my pride, and I never was capable of depreciating their merits in order to exalt my own. My work is peculiar. It is drawn almost wholly from raw material, not such as has before been worked over twenty times as was the material used by writers like Hume, Gibbon, and Macaulay, and it cannot justly be made subject to the same standard of criticism. The attempt to make finished and standard history, upon an extensive scale, out of crude, unworked material, is something new, and the effort might at least be regarded with common charity. Nevertheless, the actual defects pointed out by my assailants were few and insignificant. "If that is all the fault they can find," said one of my assistants, "it must be regarded as a great compliment." It is the propensity to inflict injury under false pretences alone that I deplore.



(—My assistants are occupied for the most part in abstracting and preparing material. After long experience some of them are able to furnish me manuscript in a more or less advanced state, and of their highest services I gladly avail myself.) The burden of the work, however, falls on me where it rightly belongs. (For the past fourteen years I have devoted on an average more than eight hours a day to my literary work, and at least one half of the manuscript has been written by my own hand, and the remainder has been so rewritten and revised by me as to make it my own. I did not rewrite what was perfectly satisfactory to me merely for the sake of rewriting; I could employ my time to greater advantage. Very little of the manuscript as it comes to me, whether in the form of rough material or more finished chapters, is the work of one person alone.) If after collecting the material at a vast outlay of time and money, making a plan of the work, writing all the leading parts alone and unaided, training assistants after innumerable failures and discouragements to help me handle the immense mass, otherwise wholly beyond the strength and control of one man, meanwhile paying them fairly for their services as the work went on—if after this I deemed it my duty to account for every line or page, which I certainly did not, to whom should I credit the work: to the indexer, or to the note-taker, or to the one who did the arranging, or to the one who put it into the rough form, or to the one who rearranged and rewrote some portions and divided it into chapters, all these several parts having been accomplished by different persons at different times; or to myself, who besides conceiving and carrying forward the work thus far, supplementing my labors by the help of others, and being alone responsible for the result, must now make it yet more completely my own by careful study, rewriting, revising, adding, eliminating, absolutely the hardest and most wearing labor a literary man can find to do—who is the author of this work I ask?

† Still another set of men compare every statement, after it is in type, with the original authority, while yet others draw the maps, prepare the lists of authorities, and make the index. And of this I am sure: call the method by any name you please, there is nothing secret, there is nothing counterfeit about it. I should like to see those who sneer at my efforts produce equivalent results by this or any other means. Of course I should be better satisfied if I could do all the work myself, including even the indexing and note-taking. It is what I do that I take pleasure in, and not what others do for me; but owing to the magnitude of the work, and having but the remnant of one short life-time before me, such a course was not possible. It has ever been my greatest happiness to recognize the merits of my assistants. Though they have not been my teacher I have learned from them and honor them. Some of them have been my almost daily associates during the entire term of my literary efforts. Among them are my most valued and devoted friends, and it is not true that I have ever assumed aught rightfully belonging to them. Often have they attempted to restrain me in my public acknowledgments of their merits. I glory in them, in what they are doing and can do; and it is with pride that I can say that were I to die to-morrow, they could and would fairly enough finish my work. I say there is no attempted secrecy about my work as has been implied, and I am



not conscious of pretending to be other than I am. Results are more to me than means, but results are valueless if the means are questionable. The name of having performed what I deem a most important task is of small moment to me as compared with its being well and faithfully done.

But why continue? Surely the evidence is clear enough that I and my labors are condemned by these men for no other reason than that I do not support the Morgan doctrine. Else why, as I before observed, have but two journals thus far assumed this tone of jeering at what is universally admitted as well-directed effort? After all it may be thought that I should be satisfied in coming before the world with so pretentious a work with receiving but two generally unfavorable criticisms against two hundred favorable ones. But that is not the point. Criticism I do not object to if made in a spirit of fairness. Were this the case I would not give out my volumes to review. No one is more my friend than he who in good faith points out my defects that I may remove them. No one will go further than I to avoid or rectify mistakes, and to follow the right in all subjects that come up for investigation.

No doubt it is presumption on the part of one not of this fold to attempt to write history; and when the work undertaken is not upon the scale to which they are accustomed, or performed in the ordinary way, the author must be put down.

Finally, I would ask: If these statements are true, and I believe I have at hand the proofs of all I have said, would it not be well to receive with some degree of allowance the criticisms printed in the columns of such papers as have fallen under the sway of these science-fanatics? I appeal to the editors and reviewers of the world to say if the quality of journalism thus dispensed by the *New York Independent* and the *New York Post* is reputable; I appeal to the fair-minded of the world to say if the proceedings of these reviewers and editors can be called honorable. It is time this low cheating and chicanery was done away with in criticism. Those who will make the reviewing of a book a cloak to cover a malicious spirit should be condemned by all good men.

I do not expect this to be the last of it. The men of Morgan will continue their assaults as occasions offer, fighting from behind stones and trees after the manner of Indians. Nor do I wish them to stop, as I said before; I have a curiosity to see what will come of it, to what further lengths they will go. I will endeavor to live through it all; and I trust this explanation to my friends and the world will forever suffice, so that whatever attitude my assailants may assume, or whatever else they may concoct, I shall not be obliged again to reply to them.



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From the *San Francisco Bulletin*.

“Certain commentaries and criticisms which have appeared of late, not so much about literary production as the methods of literary work, strike us as not only lacking in the judicial quality of temper, but as going altogether beyond the province of fair criticism, and becoming merely impertinent comments. When a gentleman goes to the table of his host, the dishes may or may not be to his liking. But he has no business with the process by which the cook prepared the dishes. His nose thrust into the kitchen is an impertinence, for which he should be soundly snubbed. When it comes to literature, the fair-minded critic has nothing to do with the processes by which any particular work has been produced. He deals with the quality only. He may be interested in the fact that Hawthorne produced his most brilliant romance while holding a political office, and was daily giving attention to the affairs of the Salem Custom House; or that Charles Lamb was a clerk, sitting on his stool during business hours in the office of the East India Company; or that Napoleon III. had a corps of paid writers and investigators to help him in bringing out his *Life of Julius Cæsar*; or that the greater number of poems written by Bryant, and nearly all his literary work were performed while he was editor of a leading newspaper, and was every day doing his work in the editorial office. But these incidents are never lugged in to depreciate literary work; or if done at all, it is by some captious or impertinent popinjay who does not know the province of honest criticism. The irresponsible Ishmaelite who whacks right and left may hope to make a mark in that way, but the mark is rather that which he makes upon himself, and which in the long run becomes repugnant to those who have some correct notions of intellectual honesty.

“Not long since the *Nation* had a criticism of a volume which had been written by an author on this coast. The writer went behind his knowledge of the book to hint, at least, about the methods of its production. The merits of the volume itself were a fairer subject for criticism. Within this limit, even the harshest comment must be tolerated. For no matter how stinging the blow is, if it is fairly dealt, it is to be accepted in good faith. There is this also to be said, that no unfavorable criticism ever permanently injured a meritorious work. The author can afford to have any amount of adverse criticism, so that the writer is decently honest, however much he may be mistaken in his judgment. Nor is it likely that the impertinence which meddles with his methods of literary production—the number of hours he is engaged in other pursuits outside of the work of authorship, the number of offices or places of business he may have, the number of persons on his pay roll, the checks he may sign, the amount of copy he may revise—will do him much

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hurt. When a book is published, the judgment of a discriminating public is challenged as to its merits. They may like it or not. Its merits and defects are legitimate subjects of comment. The critic is not invited to his back-room, nor to share any business or literary confidence. Here is so much work. The plan, design, character, years of preliminary labor, collection of documents, and all that relates to the execution of the work, has been conceived by one man. The critic has nothing to do with his early literary qualifications, whether he was a blacksmith, basket-maker, dealer in second-hand clothes, pawnbroker, or a bookseller by early occupation. The irrepressible Philistine, for the very reason that he is not an honest critic, will go beyond and dwell on these immaterial circumstances. Personal and confidential knowledge would be used, and the bushwacker might even go further and tell the public what the writer had daily for his dinner, whether he paid his market bills promptly, his laundryman and baker, what wages he paid to his employés, and so on.

"All this might be greatly relished as gossip, but it is not legitimate criticism. It belongs rather to the department of literary mendicancy. There are days of literary puppyhood before the juvenile teeth are shed, when these excrescences are expected; but in a more mature stage of development, we expect better things. No fair judgment, and none which is worth a rush, can be made up on the trivial and immaterial circumstances of authorship. Nor is it a matter of the least concern as to the way in which a writer has come by his methods—whether he was formerly a cook in a restaurant, a candle-maker, or a tanner. His work is the only thing which challenges critical judgment, and that only when he has given it to the public."

From the *San Francisco Argonaut*.

"Mr H. H. Bancroft retired from active business for the express purpose of devoting himself to his histories; he placed the management of that business in the hands of his brother, Mr A. L. Bancroft, who is still conducting it. As to the question of his employment of assistants, that is a matter of notoriety. There has never been any secrecy concerning it. Mr Bancroft has made repeated acknowledgment of their services, in the prefaces to his volumes and elsewhere. When a man devotes a large fortune, acquired during half a life-time, and devotes the remainder of that life-time as well, to the erection of a literary monument which will do honor to his native land, it is a sad commentary upon the envious and carping spirit of the day, that he should have such unjust and cruel slurs made concerning his motives and his personal honor."

[From the *San Francisco Chronicle*.]

"A short time ago the *New York Evening Post* published what it called a review of the first volume of H. H. Bancroft's *History of the Pacific States*. In reality it was an attack on Mr Bancroft's conception of the Aztec or Maya civilization, and very little space was given to the book under discussion. This was followed in a few days by a letter to the editor from an obscure lawyer in San Francisco, who made a failure of the *Californian*, and who charged that



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Mr Bancroft's historical writing was done for him by assistants, and that he was merely the editor of what purported to be his own work; that he spent his time in conducting the affairs of a large publishing house and not in writing history, and that he offered to pay for favorable reviews of his book. The letter was so full of personal malice that it is difficult to ascertain how the editor of the *Post* came to admit it, especially as the man who made these charges is unknown and irresponsible. Of course those who know Mr Bancroft do not need to have the falsehood in these charges exposed. The historian, however, could not keep silent under such scandalous accusations, and he sent to the *Post* an answer which completely disposes of his slanderer. In it he gives some details of his work, which we reproduce, as they are of interest to anyone who has read his books."

From the *Sacramento Record-Union*.

"We can congratulate the author of this work that he has met with an unkind critic. It is well that the sneer should at times play its part. In the unanimity with which Mr Bancroft's works have been received with open arms, there has been danger of praise palling upon taste. In an Eastern review he and his work have been mercilessly criticised and literally torn in twain. Reduced to its essence, the objection that our Eastern contemporary takes to Mr Bancroft's volumes consists of two things—that he employs amanuenses who do the real labor of transcription and assist in the work of composition; and secondly, that he has not taken the conventional view of early history of the Western shores, ventured to differ with some eminent authors, and has treated legend and romance as historical facts. Added to this is some carping that Mr Bancroft has not cited authors whom the reviewer deems the better writers on certain points of historic dispute. This is all there is in the criticism that has awakened so much public attention, and interested even the prosaic telegraph, when it is divested of the unquestionably scholarly guise. It is not to be conceded that the objections found to the style of Mr Bancroft are at all essential to be considered—we prefer, with the vast majority of readers, to look only at the accomplishments of the author. In the first place—though we have no commission to speak for Mr Bancroft, and no personal knowledge of what his own defense may be—it has never been a matter of concealment here that he was engaged in a work demanding the aid of a large number of ladies and gentlemen in the collation of the notes and data necessary to the work in hand. Certainly it was well known on this coast, and the designer of the work has been rather proud to make it known. Hubert Howe Bancroft, retiring from a long life of labor as a merchant, inspired by a natural love for books, and by a taste for literature, qualified by a broad reading and a liberal education, began the collection of a private library, consisting, in the main, of works devoted to the history of the peoples of the Pacific shores of this continent. In this labor he visited Europe twice, searching in every nook and corner for treasures for his library, and for rare and desirable manuscripts and maps and charts. He spared no outlay of money in ransacking the world for the material so necessary to his task. His much travel, his untiring labor and patient research in this matter, are facts of local history, and need not be repeated. Suffice it to say no private library on the globe has been drawn from such

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varied sources or accumulated under such difficulties. It now stands in a handsome building in San Francisco, which its owner erected as a fitting shrine for his work, a collection of 35,000 volumes. In detail, this library has been twice described in these columns. It was in the midst of these treasures that Mr Bancroft gave himself up to the arrangement and classifying of the facts of history relating to this coast, and the races of people who have dwelt here, the adventurers who have invaded it, the conquests it has been subject to, the scenes it has been the witness of, the growth and the development which have resulted from the contending forces of three centuries. When we listen to the theme Wagner's genius has prepared for our ear, and through it for our soul, we do not pause to ask how he accomplished it in detail. It is enough to know that he has grasped more of the divine inspiration of melody, has given it grander expression, than any of his predecessors; that he has gone beyond and before the age, and has drawn it up to him by the power of his genius. We do not invade the sanctuary of the composer and nib his pens, or test the quality of his inks; we do not care to know whether he was aided by amanuenses or not. What we do care to know is, whose was the mind that conceived, whose the perseverance that accomplished? It would add nothing to the appreciation of the work to know that the writer alone had penned every line, collated every fact, copied out every date, written every chapter and formulated every passage of a work, the very scope and character of which proves that to its accomplishment no single life would be sufficiently ample. On the contrary, the world is indebted to this man, because he had the broad comprehension and the unselfish liberality and the genius to enter upon a task that can only be compassed by the very means he has employed. There were unwritten pages of history covering in their sweep such vast periods of time, that no single intelligence had before dared to even contemplate them in their full extent, until Mr Bancroft essayed the task of gleanings from the world of scattered manuscript, books, maps, charts, letters and wasting tomes, the fact and the romance, saving to the literature of our day these molding and fast being forgotten records. It is to him that the people of this century owe it that in a compact form and a reasonable number of volumes they are to be enabled to command at one view all of historical value that is existent in the world concerning this coast. To the very few was it given alone to even peer into the treasures of the history now undertaken by Bancroft, but by his agency, the humblest scholar will be enabled to walk in fields where he had never before hoped to tread. To the unselfish ambition of an humble citizen in gratifying the desire to add to the treasure-house of the world's knowledge, we are indebted for records that will endure as long as this country has a history. We do not care to inquire into the hidden influence that inspires him to this work. We know it is not hope of gain, for from such a vast undertaking, involving such an outlay of money, there can be no adequate return in one lifetime, and we much doubt if ever the money-cost of producing this history of the Pacific States of America can be realized from the sales possible to such a work. There are certain events in the life of every man that stamp and fashion his character, but it is of no present consequence to this people what the event was that moved our fellow-citizen to enter upon the work which now absorbs the hours and years of his life and the fortune that com-

## METHODS OF LITERARY WORK.

mercial pursuits had gathered. It is enough to know that he is contributing to the intelligence of the world, and is doing a work that will not be lost when he is gone, but will, by coming generations, be prized more richly than is possible by us. What, then, if the carping critic shall discover flaws in the style of the writer; shall we allow these to blind us to his marvelous resolution and indomitable perseverance, even if we shall admit for the time and the argument that the critic is correct in his view? What if it be true that Bancroft is at times "strained and pragmatistical, or that his philosophizings are sometimes in narrow grooves and superficial"—shall we permit these defects of minor importance to blind us to the inestimable value of this ample storehouse of knowledge which he has piled to the very rafters for the delectation of his fellow-men? That in his methods and his style he gives evidence of rare originality and marked vigor of thought; that he is no mere copyist; that he is just in his estimates, cool in his judgment, dispassionate in his arraignments and faithful in his recitals, none have denied. As to the criticism that he has elevated myths into historical realities, and has sought to build into facts romances and legends, let the impartial reader determine. Certainly neither the critic nor Mr Bancroft can discuss those matters with satisfaction in the ordinary limits of newspaper columns. But we pass these profitless considerations growing out of the methods Mr Bancroft employed to index, arrange and annotate his vast collection and divide it into historical, ethnographical, biographical and physical divisions, and to draw therefrom the facts and data necessary to his task. We turn to consider rather the work itself—the result of the fine tastes of a gentleman of culture—the contribution of a Californian to the literature of his country, the gift of an unselfish man to the historical records of a nation as yet upon the threshold of life and action.

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The series contemplated by Mr Bancroft could never have been prepared had he not adopted the system he did of engaging in the work a number of assistants, who carry out the conception that is his alone, and every line of whose work passes under the master's eye and is prepared according to the model and outline he has given, while all the more important commentaries come from his pen direct, as we understand it."

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SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., Feb. 28, 1883.

MR HUBERT H. BANCROFT,

*Dear Sir:* After an examination of your historical works, and a careful consideration of their scope, the territory covered, the importance of the subject, the fullness of material at your command, and the ability displayed in handling it, we feel it our duty to express to you our warmest admiration; and to wish you that recognition which your efforts so richly deserve. To your method of writing this history we give our unqualified approbation, satisfied as we are, that it is not only the best, but the only way in which the work can be exhaustively done. Had you not undertaken it, at this time, and in this or some similar mode, the loss to the Pacific Coast, and to the world, would have been great and lasting, if not irreparable.

Respectfully Yours,

LORENZO SAWYER, Judge U. S. Circuit Court,  
OGDEN HOFFMAN, Judge U. S. District Court,  
OLIVER P. EVANS, Judge Superior Court, San Francisco,  
D. J. TOOHY, Judge Superior Court, San Francisco.

## WHAT IS BEING SAID OF MR HUBERT H. BANCROFT AND HIS LITERARY WORK.

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### STYLE.

"His style is clear and without affectation, recalling the straightforward simplicity of Herodotus."—*London Westminster Review*.

"He writes well and gracefully."—*New York Sun*.

"I am full of admiration at the immense reading it displays, and at the singular, vivid, and graceful English in which that reading is expressed."—*W. H. Lecky*.

"The work is intensely interesting. Mr Bancroft's style is clear, his arrangement of materials judicious, and his symmetry admirable."—*Chicago Journal*.

"Striking passages are welded together with a logical cohesion so strict that it is almost impossible to detach them."—*New York Herald*.

"It is written in a clear, concise way, the language being always well chosen, and quite frequently very beautiful, without any straining for effect."—*Pittsburg Gazette*.

"High standard of style and scholarship."—*Boston Zion's Herald*.

"It is of great value, which is enhanced by its charm of style."—*Chicago Times*.

"I am particularly pleased with the sharp, condensed form in which the facts are given."—*Oliver Wendell Holmes*.

"Mr Bancroft's style deserves great commendation. He has evidently sought to be concise—those who do so often become obscure. He has not fallen into this fault. It has been said that the first qualification of a good writer is to have a clear notion of what he wishes to express. Mr Bancroft always has this; he must have great analytical power, and yet his descriptions manifest an unusual skill in synthetical reconstruction. His style is concise, lucid, graphic, often epigrammatic."—*San Francisco Bulletin*.

"The information has been digested into a flowing and entertaining narrative."—*New York Observer*.

"Clear, concise, forcible, and well adapted to the requirements of modern students."—*Overland Monthly*.

### ABILITY.

"He has applied the scientific methods of history writing in a manner never before dreamed of."—*Record-Union*.

"Beyond all the patient labor in marshalling details, Mr Bancroft shows also a sound, healthy literary judgment."—*Atlantic Monthly*.



"He has investigated with the most conscientious care and criticised with no little skill the enormous mass of official documents which in different ways relate to his subject; and he has digested the results of his laborious toil into a narrative clear, logical, and attractive."—*London Times*.

"You have handled a complex, sometimes even tangled and tautological subject, with much clearness and discrimination. The conscientious labor in collecting, and the skill shown in the convenient arrangement of such a vast body of material, deserve the highest praise."—*J. R. Lowell*.

"The plan of the great work has been honored in the execution."—*Daily Oregonian*.

"It is a monument of well-directed industry and great ability."—*Edinburgh Scotsman*.

"A lasting monument to the scholarship and ability of its author."—*Louisville Courier-Journal*.

"The industry, the sound judgment, and the excellent literary style displayed in this work cannot be too highly praised. It stands quite alone of its class in this department."—*Boston Post*.

"Mr Prescott was carried away by his vivid imagination, and errs in excess. Mr Morgan errs in the opposite direction. Mr Bancroft avoids both extremes. Without such preliminary work as that which has been done by Mr Bancroft, a history would be impossible."—*Edinburgh Review*.

"The manner in which you have sifted and weighed the testimony, derived as it is from various and sometimes contradictory sources; the penetration and impartiality you have displayed in discarding whatever is erroneous or doubtful, and accepting that only which is well authenticated, would be creditable in a judicial investigation."—*J. Ross Browne*.

"Never was a large library more thoroughly ransacked or more completely laid under tribute by a writer."—*The Nation*.

"Where Mr Bancroft expresses opinions of his own, or discourses on the bearing and significance of the observations of others, he performs the part of the enlightened critic with much shrewdness and modesty."—*London Telegraph*.

"Every reader must admire the single-heartedness with which he devotes himself to the investigation of facts. His volumes are really a marvel of research and discrimination. Although he does not conceal his consciousness of a mission, he shows no trace of the credulity with which specialists are apt to pursue the inquiries to which they have devoted their lives. His sound judgment is no less apparent on the pages of his work than his indefatigable diligence and supreme self-devotedness. No one but an enthusiast could grapple with such a task, but his enthusiasm is without weakness, and is inspired by the pure love of knowledge, not by the caprices of sentiment. Hence it is of the quality demanded for the successful accomplishment of one of the foremost literary enterprises of the day."—*New York Tribune*.

"What good sense, painstaking labor, and honesty of purpose can hope to achieve, Mr Bancroft has accomplished."—*London Standard*.

"Nothing seems to have been too minute to escape his eyes."—*Boston Transcript*.

"The history of literature does not contain many examples of a grander literary purpose, a more thorough preparation, or a more successful achievement."—*Boston Congregationalist*.

## THE WORK.

"Not only unequalled, but unapproached. A literary enterprise more deserving of a generous sympathy and support has never been undertaken on this side of the Atlantic."—*North American Review*.

"One of the most notable in our literature."—*Literary World*.

"I am finding your collection of facts very valuable for my own more immediate ends in writing the *Principles of Sociology*."—*Herbert Spencer*.

"A work of enormous research, and requiring careful study."—*Sir H. C. Rawlinson*.

"The wonder and admiration of all literary men; and will be a lasting monument of the indomitable energy and perseverance of a man who is devoting the best part of his life to enrich the literature of the world by giving to it a correct history of this hitherto almost unknown and incomprehensible part of the globe."—*J. M. Hamilton*.

"Magnificent work."—*Charles Darwin*.

"A solid one."—*Max Müller*.

"Exceedingly interesting and important."—*Thomas Carlyle*.

"One of the noblest literary enterprises of our day."—*John G. Whittier*.

"He has discovered a thousand rivulets of doubtful source and uncertain direction, and united them into a broad historic stream. We know of no volume of history more instructive to the student, or more interesting to the general reader. It will remain forever a monument to the industry and ability of the author."—*Territorial Enterprise*.

"A monument of literary and historical industry."—*A. R. Spofford*.

"It is simply fascinating."—*Clarence King*.

"An interesting work, conveying great profit and instruction."—*Sir John Lubbock*.

"It is a production of almost incredible labor, of excellent arrangement, and admirable execution, everywhere betraying the union of quiet enthusiasm and sound judgment which have been exercised in its preparation."—*George Ripley*.

"Of surpassing interest, and of a value great and constantly increasing."—*Hartford Courant*.

"Interests readers of every class."—*Christian Union*.

"A very valuable addition to the history of the American continent."—*Boston Advertiser*.

"A monument that will cause his name to be remembered ages after he has ceased to be in the flesh."—*The Guardian*.

"It is safe to say that there has not occurred in the literary history of the United States a more piquant surprise."—*Scribner's Monthly*.

"The work forms one of the most valuable contributions of modern times, and should have an honored place in every well-selected library."—*Journal of Science*.

"His completed work will be reckoned among the most precious treasures of our literature."—*Literary World*.

"A great storehouse of facts which bear upon the most important speculations."—*San Francisco Post*.

"One of the most formidable and important literary undertakings of modern times."—*Stockton Independent*.

"It will be a standard work on this interesting subject for all coming time, and will immortalize the author."—*San José Mercury*.

"Your work has taught me a great many things. It needs no praise from me. It will be consulted and read centuries after you are gone."—*Jno. W. Draper*.

"The work is one of immense magnitude and importance; yet the promise is of its being well done."—*Norwich Bulletin*.

"The work will be one of the most important in the language."—*American Booksellers' Guide*.

"One of the most complete and exhaustive works ever published."—*Nevada Transcript*.

"It is worthy of special attention by the historical student and the general reader."—*Boston Globe*.

"A more interesting book has seldom been put in our hands, containing a mine of information of which we confess we were utterly ignorant."—*Land and Water, London*.

"Embodies much more than any other single literary production."—*Deseret News*.

"A fascinating tale."—*Vallejo Chronicle*.

"The book contains a wealth of information, and its interest is quite that of an entrancing romance, notwithstanding the severely accurate manner in which the author deals with his subject."—*Milwaukee Sentinel*.

"The plan sketched is a magnificent one, and a substantial contribution will be made to the realized knowledge of the world."—*Family Treasury, London*.

"The history of this book as well as its contents is of public interest."—*The Academy, London*.

"It is the only history of the kind in existence, and its value can hardly be overestimated."—*Gold Hill News*.

"The value of this work is certainly beyond calculation."—*Stanislaus News*.

"Dans cette grande œuvre, il a prodigué les bank notes comme un spéculateur, pour travailler ensuite avec la longue patience d'un érudit."—*Paris Revue*.

"Exceptionally great historic work."—*Springfield Republican*.

"The most unique and extensive literary enterprise ever undertaken in any country by a single private individual."—*Buffalo Advertiser*.

"J'en connaissais le plan, grâce à un article du *Times*, que l'un de nos correspondants de Londres avait eu l'attention d'adresser à l'académie de Stanislas, dont je fais partie. L'exécution répond complètement à ce qui a été annoncé par la presse."—*Lucien Adam*.

"It shows great merit, and is an excellent contribution to the permanent literature of the country."—*A. A. Sargent.*

"Beyond all ordinary forms of praise."—*San Francisco Chronicle.*

"It is certainly a worthy scheme, and is being carried out most conscientiously."—*London Spectator.*

"It shows you are working for true success and not for momentary applause."—*Daniel C. Gilman.*

"It is a labor the value of which will be more clearly seen as time goes by." *Baltimore Gazette.*

"Of extraordinary research, and of the deepest interest to every intelligent citizen."—*Bakersfield Courier.*

"The chapter which Prescott devotes, in his *Conquest of Mexico*, to the manners and customs of the Aztecs, is the most attractive in his attractive book, and that has hitherto been the best source of information upon the matter, within reach of the general English reader; but it is now thrown into the shade, at least so far as comprehensiveness of treatment is concerned, by Mr Bancroft's labors."—*Alla California.*

"Ademas del mérito incontestable de la obra, hay otro muy grande en las notas, y el libro ofrece nueva utilidad como tabla general de las cosas de América. No ha querido V. presentar solamente el resultado de sus inmensas investigaciones, sino que tambien ha querido dar á otros los medios de tratar los mismos materias, bajo diferente punto de vista."—*Joaquin Garcia Icazbalceta.*

"A clearer and more truthful picture has never yet been produced."—*London News.*

"La bibliothèque, qui est son œuvre, l'a beaucoup aidé pour ce travail, mais il s'est en outre entouré de documents précieux puisés dans les archives qui des républiques qui se sont fait un honneur de les mettre à sa disposition."—*L'Italie, Rome.*

"Auch im entferntesten Westen giebt es Männer, die sich für Kunst und Wissenschaft interessiren, und zwar nicht, wie mancher vielleicht annehmen möchte, um pekuniären Nutzen daraus zu ziehen, sondern allein aus Liebe zur guten Sache. Ein treffendes Beispiel hierzu gewährt die grosse und reiche Privatbibliothek des Hrn. Hubert H. Bancroft in San Francisco."—*Bibliothekswissenschaft, Dresden.*

"Il Presidente Quadra mentre commenda altamente il colossale lavoro istorico condotto con tanta intelligente sagacia dall' onor. Hubert H. Bancroft (che come già annunciammo in altro numero, si propone di compilare la istoria della California e delle Repubbliche ispano-americane) dice che a causa delle convulsioni politiche che fin dalla loro esistenza di mezzo secolo tennero sempre sossopra quei paesi, fecero trascurare quest' opera. Ed invero quelle repubbliche hanno pur gloriose pagine!"—*L'Eco d'Italia.*

"A tantas palabras de encomio y estímulo por parte de hombres notables por su saber, hay que agregar la presteza y benevolencia con que los Presidentes del Salvador y Nicaragua, y los gobernadores de los Estados mejicanos de Jalisco y Sonora se han ofrecido á suministrar al señor Bancroft cuantos datos, manuscritos é impresos sean necesarios para que pueda llevar á buen término la historia de los países comprendidos entre el istmo de Panamá y el estrecho de Behring."—*Voz del Nuevo Mundo.*



## PERSONAL.

"No tribute can be too great to the industry and research of the author."—*British Quarterly Review*.

"Mr Bancroft's manner is calculated to give us confidence."—*London Saturday Review*.

"Mr Bancroft's motto is 'Thorough.' His mind is of the German cast."—*Charles Nordhoff*.

"Mr Bancroft is the historian for whom we have all been looking, and we may count ourselves fortunate in finding him so worthy of his task."—*The Galaxy*.

"To Mr Bancroft we tender cordial congratulations, with assurances of our sincere appreciation of the ability, candor, and research which characterize every step in the progress of his great work."—*New York Independent*.

"He has entered on one of the boldest literary enterprises ever undertaken."—*Francis Parkman*.

"He has done more than any public society would have done for fifty years to come, and what perhaps no society could do at any later period."—*P. B. Avery*.

"His success has been remarkable, and his work will be of the greatest service."—*Nature, London*.

"He is evidently a most painstaking and conscientious worker."—*Popular Science Monthly*.

"We question whether it has ever fallen to the lot of one man to conduct so successfully, so colossal a literary enterprise."—*Boston Journal*.

"Won the praise of Herbert Spencer and Sir Arthur Helps, in England, and that of all interested in the subject in that country, and of very many in Germany and France. The praise was well deserved."—*Philadelphia Gazette*.

"I am glad to see your work welcomed in Europe as well as in your own country. In the universality of your researches you occupy a field of the deepest interest to the world, and without a rival."—*George Bancroft*.

"Several of the Presidents of the Central American and Mexican States have appointed commissioners to collect and forward to Mr Bancroft materials for his history."—*New York Post*.

"The projector of such an enterprise can have no sordid motive; a very limited endowment of sagacity may perceive the futility of pecuniary return awaiting work of this character."—*The Examiner*.

"What a godsend such a devotee would have been for the Atlantic coast a hundred years ago!"—*Wendell Phillips*.

"I am amazed at the extent and minuteness of your researches."—*William Cullen Bryant*.

"What strikes me most in it is the exceeding fairness with which he treats the researches and the theories of other inquirers into subjects akin to his own."—*Sir Arthur Helps*.

"Whittier, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, Emerson, Higginson, Gray, Phillips, Warner, Adams, Porter, Nordhoff, of the Atlantic literati, as well as all Californians of erudition, have congratulated Mr Bancroft on his great undertaking and successful accomplishment."—*Marysville Appeal*.

"Children yet unborn in the Golden State of the Pacific will rise up and call him blessed who has left them such a rich inheritance."—*Santa Cruz Sentinel*.

"You have done yourself and your State great honor."—*Samuel L. M. Barlow*.

"I am amazed at your courage and perseverance in working your way through such a chaparral of authorities as you quote. Your labor is immense."—*Henry W. Longfellow*.

"Your practised eye, by looking at a single one of his notes in the first volume of his great book, will recognize an extraordinary thoroughness and wealth of preparation, and his patience and modesty in doing this work in comparative obscurity and without sympathy, furnish an example for us all."—*T. W. Higginson to James Parton*.

"Men have before devoted life and fortune to the prosecution of great historical works, and have labored with a diligence and a thoroughness which can scarcely be surpassed; but it has been reserved for Mr Bancroft to unite complete mastery of his subjects with rapidity of workmanship quite unparalleled, and possible only through a scientific process of study and classification."—*Sacramento Record*.

"'God bless such workers!' says Charles D. Warner, and we heartily say the same."—*Literary Review*.

"The Macaulay of the West."—*Wendell Phillips*.

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#### SOME LATER NOTICES.

"One is carried along from the very first page by an impetuosity which is at once charming and irresistible. The interest is immediately awakened, the attention promptly fixed. There is something in the dash and flow which in itself attracts and excites. \* \* \* The present volume is a marvel of industry and hard work. The material collected, the authorities consulted, the skill with which all have been collected and arranged, and the attractiveness of style in which the whole has been presented to the public, merit the highest praise. The narrative abounds in incidents of exciting interest and facts of great importance—social, historical, and political; rendering this latest literary achievement of Mr Bancroft as work attractive alike to the general reader, the historian, the statesman, and the sociologist. Of Mr Bancroft's *Native Races*, men of prominence, like Mr Herbert Spencer and Mr Lecky, wrote in the most eulogistic terms; and no juster criticism can be pronounced on the distinguished American historian's recent publication, than to say that it is in every respect worthy of its predecessor in the instructive and important series of contributions to American history, on which our author is engaged."—*London Morning Post*.

"We hardly know which to admire most—the marvelous patience and perseverance of the author, or the scholarly learning and just and discriminating judgment which is displayed. The style is one that should be followed by historians. It is clear and forcible, and the manner in which he has chronicled the events is masterly."—*Liverpool Albion and Telephone*.

"Of the work in hand, the first volume is now before us; and, accepting it as a fair sample of the whole, we are bound to offer our tribute to the author, for the enormous industry indicated and for the style in which the work is being carried through."—*Glasgow Herald*.

"His style is at once vigorous and suave ; descending now with Hume into the profundities of philosophic thought ; now soaring with Ruskin into the realms of poetic fancy, or breaking forth frequently with the unmistakable brilliancy of genius. He shows ability in depicting the beauties of nature, and in portraying character and motive. Nor does he fail in the subtleties of sarcasm ; and in the use of classic allusions he shows a prudence admirably distinct from the affectation of mere sippers at the Pierian fountains. Though precise like Gibbon, he avoids his formality ; though massive, he rounds his acute stateliness. America may well be proud of her western historian, who must take his place with the foremost of the age."—*Sacramento Record-Union*.

"His research, no less than his vivid and graceful style, has extorted the admiration of Mr. Lecky and Mr. Herbert Spencer ; and the present volume bears abundant traces both of his laborious collection of materials and of his power of using them in the construction of a narrative of fascinating interest."—*London Daily News*.

"The vivid narrative flows on with astonishing ease and power. There is not a dull page in the book."—*The Continent*.

"Your method of study is absolutely the only way of accomplishing the vast undertaking which you have entered upon—one of the most remarkable in literary history. The example of wealth successfully devoted to a high intellectual object, will be a benefit to the whole country ; and the throwing of so much enterprise and energy into such a channel will go far to remove one of the stigmas of our American civilization."—*Francis Parkman*.

"Mr Bancroft is a remarkable man. His volumes are rich and attractive, and crammed full of good learning. It cannot be read in haste, particularly if one wishes to get at the substance of the notes as he goes along, which have so much real historical meat in them. The Columbus portion, I have enjoyed thoroughly. It seems to me the author's aim is truth, and not eulogy. Having previously studied somewhat the subject of the early maps, I was particularly interested in his long note on that important theme. His criticisms on those writers who had previously gone over his ground, or a portion of it, seem fair and generous. The introduction to this book is a marvellous piece of generalization."—*Charles Dean, L.L.D.*

"The advance volume you sent me has been eagerly examined, and proves more than I dared to hope—full of interesting facts, well marshalled ; the narrative well sustained, and the basis of profound, exhaustive knowledge of the whole ground apparent everywhere."—*Wendell Phillips*.

"Mr Bancroft knows how highly I appreciate the importance of the great work upon which he is engaged, and also the fearless and impartial spirit in which it is undertaken. I am certain that the early history of the continent will gain in interest by the revision of judgment of many historical characters and events."—*Charles D. Warner*.

"The plan and execution thus far is worthy of the author of the *Native Races*, a work monumental of his industry and ability, and of which every American should be proud. I shall look for the succeeding volumes with eager interest."—*John G. Whittier*.

"It is amazing to see what a man dares undertake, still more to see what he has accomplished. After your first *magnum opus* there is nothing we do not think you capable of ; and, if you should announce the prospective publication of 'A Diary of the World from A. M. One to the present day, in one hundred cords of octavo volumes,' we should believe you would do it according to the prospects. I found wonderful pleasure in your previous work, and I doubt not that the coming one will equal the expectations which the first has raised."—*Oliver Wendell Holmes*.



"Probably there is nothing in the world which exactly corresponds in value, in interest, in abundance, and in completeness, with this priceless library. Both hemispheres have been searched for treasures to fill it, and with such results that there is no country on the globe, for whose early history such ample material has now been brought together as for that of California. The *Native Races* gave Mr Bancroft at once a distinguished position as an investigator, and it is not too much to say that his additions to our previous knowledge of the civilization which the Spaniards found on the Pacific Coast were so important and so interesting that they seemed like disclosures. He is now recognized as an authority of the first rank. Mr Bancroft has had access to a multitude of documents, which were unknown to the earlier historian, and has followed a method much more searching and precise than suited Irving's temperament. As a consequence, we have a narrative which is practically new, abounding in picturesque detail, and presenting the tragical romance of discovery and conquest with a particularity and vividness it has never possessed in any previous record. The story is well constructed, and in spite of the profusion of incidents, it is clear, it is interesting, and it is animated. Of the writer's sincere regard for the truth there cannot be a doubt. To the history proper he prefixes a brilliant introductory chapter upon Spanish character and civilization at the period of the conquest; and this is followed by the story of Columbus, and an exhaustive and admirable summary of geographical knowledge and discovery from the earliest record to the year 1540. We might copy specimen pages almost at random without danger of doing Mr Bancroft injustice, for he is never dull."—*New York Tribune*.

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"Seven or eight years ago Mr Hubert H. Bancroft, of San Francisco, surprised the reading world with his *Native Races of the Pacific States*, wherein he gave astonishing glimpses into an antiquity rivaling that of Egypt, and disclosed the little-thought-of fact, that what is called the New World is quite as likely as not, the old one, ethnologically as well as geologically. That work was regarded as a marvel of research, and justly so, in comparison with most works in the historic field, and had the further credit of investing a naturally dry theme, with a singularly living interest. This was at once accepted as a standard work, and its author thought to have fixed himself among the first historic writers of the day. But the work of collecting material relating to the Pacific States of North America went on after the

completion of that work, until the author has now collected a library of more than thirty-five thousand volumes, all relating to that region, and he has projected and begun a historical work of colossal proportions. So far as is known, business methods, as they may be called, have never been applied on so complete a scale, to the preparation of such a work. The result is marvellous—marvellous in respect to the amount of labor which one man is thus enabled to accomplish within a given time. The value of the history, considered as a whole, depends upon the master-mind which directs the whole—upon its capacity to group facts and generalize from them. This breadth, vigor, and clearness of mental grasp, Mr Bancroft has in an eminent degree. For the first time, the story of the beginnings of Spanish occupation of America is put into a connected and lucidly arranged form in the English tongue. A large portion of the cited authorities has never hitherto been known to the world. Mr Bancroft has unearthed old State and ecclesiastical manuscripts, of whose existence all traces had been lost, and has thrown a flood of light upon subjects which have seemed forever obscured. This is notably so in two or three points. For example, it has always seemed a most extraordinary thing that Columbus should meet with the failures which attended his colonization enterprises, and the repeated neglects and abuses of those in power, if he was indeed the ready-to-be-canonized saint that Irving, for instance, paints him. Mr Bancroft makes the matter clear. With judicial fairness he shows the weak as well as the strong points of the man's character, and one sees clearly how the very characteristics that lead to his success as a navigator and discoverer, totally unfitted him to be either soldier or politician; and, combined with unquestionably unjust treatment, made the latter part of his life full of almost, or quite, insane delusions. Among the most interesting features of the work are the copious bibliographical foot-notes, many of them containing criticisms, nearly always bold, original, acute, of Irving, Prescott, and other authors; but criticism which, however fearless and incisive, is always frank and good-tempered. It would be a pleasure to follow the beginning of this colossal undertaking further in detail, but it is impracticable here. The day will come when the beginnings of the history of the vast empire, yet in its babyhood, on our Pacific slope, will be studied more curiously than that of any other part of the world, and no other work can ever hope to rival that of Mr Bancroft as the standard authority. It presents evidence of wide and patient research; it is generalized with remarkable breadth of view; it is clear in statement, lucid in arrangement, and last, but by no means least, it is pervaded with a flavor of living, breathing interest in its author, which makes it interesting to the reader. In fine, the completed work, finished on the scale of this opening volume, will be worthy to take rank with the very best of modern historical works, with points of superiority to nearly all of them."—*Chicago Times*.

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"Especially worthy of careful reading are the notes on Columbus, and on the credibility of the early chroniclers. In the former he makes a keen



analysis of the defects of Irving and Prescott, showing that each was a special pleader, sacrificing the truth of history to the hero he was placing on a pedestal. The author pays a generous tribute to their work, but he shows that it is not history in the best sense of the word."—*S. F. Chronicle*.

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"The freshness and vigor here displayed last to the end of the volume. But if we were to single out the individual characteristic which pre-eminently distinguishes Mr Bancroft's writings, we should fix on the wonderful care of which all his works bear such unmistakable signs. The present volume is a marvel of industry and hard work. The materials collected, the authorities consulted, the skill with which all have been collated and arranged, and the attractiveness of style in which the whole has been presented to the public, merit the highest praise. Mr Bancroft commences his *History of the Pacific States*, which may be described as a continuation of his *Native Races of the Pacific States*, with a brilliant sketch of Spain and European civilization in the beginning of the sixteenth century, and he then dashes into the subject proper of his book. In the *Native Races of the Pacific States*, Mr Bancroft, as the title of the work suggests, dealt with the aboriginal inhabitants of the country. In the work now before us he treats of the European discoverers and settlers, and continues the history of the aboriginal inhabitants in a more advanced stage of social and political evolution. The narrative abounds in incidents of exciting interest and facts of great importance, social, historical, and political, rendering this latest literary achievement of Mr Bancroft a work attractive alike to the general reader, the historian, the statesman, and the sociologist. Of Mr Bancroft's *Native Races*, men of prominence like Mr Herbert Spencer and Mr Lecky wrote in the most eulogistic terms, and no juster criticism can be pronounced on the distinguished American historian's recent production than to say that it is in every respect worthy of its predecessor in the instructive and important series of contributions to American history on which our author is engaged."

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